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Scribe & Legouvé - Adrienne Lecouvreur -

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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
OF NEW YORK

..
1918

Adrienne Lecouvreur.

A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.

As played by

MADAME MODJESKA.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
PUBLISHER,
89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
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With Moustache on wire.....	2	6			
Superior, real hair	3	6			
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ADRIENNE
LECOUVREUR.

A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS,

WRITTEN BY MM. SCRIBE AND LEGOUVÉ,

ADAPTED BY

H. HERMAN

(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society).

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*Produced at the Royal Court Theatre, Saturday,
December 11th, 1880.*

CHARACTERS.

Maurice de Saxe ...	...	...	Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON
Prince de Bouillon ...	...	...	Mr. J. D. BEVERIDGE
Abbé de Chazeuil ...	...	...	Mr. LIN RAYNE
Michonnet (<i>Prompter</i>)	} <i>Sociétaires</i> }	...	Mr. G. W. ANSON
Poisson		...	Mr. J. W. LAWRENCE
Quinault		...	Mr. BRIAN DARLEY
(Of the Comédie Française)			
Servant ...	...	...	Mr. NEVILLE DOONE
Call-boy ...	...	...	Mr. R. RIVERS
Princess de Bouillon ...	...	...	Miss AMY ROSELLE
Duchess d'Aumont ...	...	...	Miss WINIFRED EMERY
Marquise de Sancerre ...	...	...	Miss BLANCHE GARNIER
Countess de Beauveau...	...	...	Miss DORINE O'BRIEN
Adrienne Lecouvreur ...	...	...	Mme. HELENA MODJESKA
(Of the Comédie Française)			
Mdlle. Jouvenot	}	...	Miss KATE VARRE
Mdlle. Dangeville		...	Miss KATE LEESON
(Of the Comédie Française)			
Maid ...	...	...	Miss JULIA ROSELLE
Servants, Actors, Actresses, Ladies and Noblemen.			

SCENES.

ACT I.	THE PRINCESS'S BOUDOIR.
ACT II.	GREEN ROOM OF THE COMEDIE FRANÇAISE.
ACT III.	THE VILLA AT LA GRANGE BATELIERE.
ACT IV.	THE PRINCESS'S SALON.
ACT V.	ADRIENNE'S HOME.

TIME—1730.

ADRIENNE LECOUVREUR.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*An elegantly furnished boudoir ; doors, c. and R. 3 E.*

PRINCESS and ABBÉ discovered. PRINCESS seated before glass, R., and ABBÉ behind her chair, attending.

PRIN. What, Abbé? No news whatever? Not a little wee bit of scandal?

AB. Alas! No.

PRIN. Your occupation's gone. It is your profession to know all the news. Give me that box! Come, try! I see, by the air of mystery you assume, that you know more than you pretend.

AB. Trifles, certainly! Will it be worth your while to know that Mademoiselle Lecouvreur and Mademoiselle Duclos will play in the same piece to-night, in "*Bajazet*?" The house will be crowded.

PRIN. Stop! One moment, Abbé. Would you place this spot on the cheek, or at the corner of the left eye?

AB. (*at back of chair*) If I were sure, Princess, that you would pardon the liberty, I might find courage to tell you that I am openly, radically opposed to the system of spots.

PRIN. Why, it is a revolution you would attempt! 'You, with your soft and timid air. I should never have thought you so courageous a priest.

AB. Timid! I am timid in your presence only.

PRIN. Nonsense! Well, you were saying just now—go on!

AB. That the performance this evening, will be all the more interesting, as Mesdemoiselles Lecouvreur and Duclos are rivals. Adrienne has the entire public on her side, whilst Mademoiselle Duclos is openly protected by certain great noblemen—and even by certain noble ladies—among them by—by her Highness the Princess de Bouillon—

PRIN. By me?

AB. Yes, and everybody is astonished at it, and they commence, in our world, even to smile—

PRIN. And why, pray?

AB. For reasons which I neither can nor dare mention—because my delicacy and my scruples—

PRIN. Scruples? You, Abbé? And you were saying just now there was nothing new. Finish! Go on!

AB. Well, madam—Princess! since you insist that I should tell you: you, the grand-daughter of Sobiesky, the

cousin of our Queen, you have for rival Mademoiselle Duclos, of the Comédie Française.

PRIN. You don't mean to say so?

AB. It's the news of the day; all our world knows it, excepting you, and as you might appear ridiculous in our world were you to remain ignorant of it, I found courage to inform you——

PRIN. That the Prince has given her a carriage and diamonds.

AB. Quite true.

PRIN. And a villa?

AB. True again.

PRIN. Just beyond the Boulevards, at La Grange Batelière.

AB. What! Princess, you knew it then?

PRIN. Long before you—*(rises)*—long before your world. Listen to me, my pretty Abbé. This for your instruction! M. de Bouillon, my husband, although a great nobleman, is a learned man; he adores the arts, and he revels in the sciences. He acquired this practice under the last régime.

AB. From inclination?

PRIN. No. To pay his court to the Regent, whose exact counterpart he strove to become, and in his efforts to imitate as faithfully as possible, he took care not to forget the gallantry of his hero. I was not excessively displeased at this. A lady can always call her time much more her own when her husband is occupied. And so that mine, though faithless, should still remain dependent upon me, I forgave Mademoiselle Duclos, who did nothing without my orders and kept me informed of everything. These were the terms on which she enjoyed my protection; you see that I kept my word.

AB. Excellent! Admirable! But, Princess, what do you gain by it?

PRIN. What do I gain by it? My husband, fearing discovery, trembles before the grand-daughter of Sobiesky, in case she might suspect—and I do suspect when I want to. What do I gain by it? Formerly he was very niggardly, now he refuses me nothing. *(sits on couch)* Does a light dawn upon you?

AB. Oh, yes, yes! I see.

PRIN. Your world then may pity me, and sigh about my position. And now, my dear Abbé, if you have nothing else to tell me——

AB. Oh, yes, madam, something else——

PRIN. Something else?

AB. Something that concerns me personally and this

time, I am quite sure that you have not the slightest idea of it. It is—

PRIN. That you love me.

AB. You knew that too! Is it possible? And you didn't tell me a word about it?

PRIN. Surely, I wasn't obliged to herald it.

AB. Ah, yes! certainly! (*about to kneel; she stops him*) It was for you that I became the intimate friend of your husband; and for you I listen to his chemical discussions, although I always fall asleep in doing so.

PRIN. Poor Abbé!

AB. Ah, those are the happiest moments of my life—I then hear him no more,—and I dream of you. Surely you will confess that such devotion merits some reward.

PRIN. Oh, yes! I have been told that success has often crowned less deserving efforts. But at the risk of appearing ungrateful—even to such unselfish merit, I cannot listen to you now. (*crosses to R.*)

PRINCE. (*outside*) My dear Duchess, you are quite right.
(*Duchess laughs outside*)

PRIN. Silence! Somebody comes. It is my husband and the Duchess d'Aumont. By-the-bye, did you not try your fortune there also?

AB. Alas yes! But I have been forestalled.

PRIN. That was unlucky. (*aside*) The poor Abbé is always too late.

Enter PRINCE and DUCHESS; the PRINCESS meets the DUCHESS, and they shake hands.

PRIN. What good fairy brings you so early?

PRINCE. The Duchess comes to ask you to render her a service.

PRIN. One pleasure the more. And where did you meet my husband, whom I have not seen since the day before yesterday?

DUCH. At my uncle's house, the Cardinal's.

PRINCE. Yes, the great Prime Minister is, like myself, a member of the Academy of Sciences, therefore, I dedicated to him my new treatise on chemistry—the book which astonished M. de Voltaire himself. “Never before,” said he to me, “has such a work been written.” These are his own words, and I believe every syllable of them.

PRIN. So do I, but the Cardinal Prime Minister?

PRINCE. I am coming to it. (*enter a SERVANT bringing a small casket*) Place that casket there. (*SERVANT places casket on table, and exits*) The Cardinal, who knows my talents, both as a statesman and a savant, has confided to me a commission as honourable as it is terrible—

PRIN. And what may that be, pray?

PRINCE. The analysis, both from a judicial and scientific point of view, of the substance contained in that casket—a mysterious powder of deadly properties, which has been found in the house of a lady of high birth, accused of attempted murder.

PRIN. (*stepping forward*) How interesting ! (*advances*)

DUCH. Do let us see it. (*advances*)

PRINCE. Be careful, ladies. (*they retire*) If I am told truly, one grain of this powder thrown into a pair of gloves, or sprinkled over a flower, is sufficient to produce at first a vague stupor, then strong aberration of the cerebrum, and finally a delirium which ends in death. (*places casket on small table at back*) All this, however, will be scientifically demonstrated—for I will analyse this powder, make my experiments, and after that my report.

PRIN. Very well ; but all this scientific analysis does not explain to me your absence yesterday.

PRINCE. (*aside to ABBE*) Now I am in for it. Jealousy !

AB. (*aside*) Yes, the storm has been brewing.

PRINCE. (*aside*) You will see how I will weather it. (*aloud to PRINCESS*) You ask, madam, what I did yesterday. I was preparing a surprise for you. (*hands her a jewel case*)

PRIN. What is this ?

PRINCE. (*aside to ABBE*) You see !

PRIN. What superb diamonds !

PRINCE. (*to ABBE*) And as to the analysis of this diabolical powder, this is my argument, Abbé. (*speaks in dumb show*)

AB. (*aside*) Another lecture on chemistry.

PRIN. (*to DUCHESS*) Do look at this bracelet, my dear. Is it not in exquisite taste ?

DUCH. And so artistically mounted ! It is splendid.

PRIN. Come, Abbé ! come and admire !

AB. I ? admire ? I am listening here.

PRINCE. Yes, I am explaining, but he does not seem to understand. I must demonstrate it to him.

(*steps to table*)

ABE. No, no, thank you ! Quite unnecessary ! I prefer the argument to the demonstration.

PRIN. Now, whilst these gentlemen continue their scientific discussion, pray tell me what is the service you require from me ?

DUCH. I must confess to you, Princess, that there is one person whose genius I admire above all others,—whom I rave about—Mademoiselle Adrienne Lecouvreur.

PRIN. Well !

DUCH. Is it true that she will give a private recitation here to-morrow ? The Prince told me so just now.

PRINCE. (*going to LADIES*) We have invited her.

PRIN. Yes, that is true, although I do not share your enthusiasm, my dear Duchess, and much prefer Mademoiselle Duclos. But Mademoiselle Lecouvreur seems to be the idol of the moment and her recitations the events of the day.

AB. She is the fashion.

PRIN. Yes, that word explains all. And since Madame de Noailles, whom I cannot bear, made sure of securing her for her reception to-morrow, I invited her a week ago, and here is her answer.

DUCH. A letter from her! Ah, do let me look at her writing.

PRINCE. You were right, Duchess. This is adoration.

DUCH. I never miss one of her performances; but I have never seen her in private. They say she dresses most becomingly—and that her manners are so refined—so distinguished.

PRINCE. The Prince de Bourbon said of her, the other day, that she looked like a queen amidst comedians.

PRIN. A compliment which she answered by a turn of phrase which was impolite, if to the point. I alluded to it in my invitation; hear her reply: (*reading*) "If I had the imprudence to say before M. d'Argental that we, princesses of the stage, had the advantage over those of the Court, in playing only at night, whilst they acted all day, he was very wrong in repeating this to you, and I still more so for having said it, even in jest. You proved this to me, madam, by the kindness and frankness of your letter. It contains evidence of such dignity, charm, and princely grace, that I have placed it on my writing-table, to be able to compare the genuine with the imitation. I had promised myself not to recite in society again, as I am far from strong, and afraid of the increased fatigue. But how could a poor girl, like myself, refuse when *you* asked? You might have wrought me proud! If I am, madam, it is only of the honour of being your very humble and obedient servant, Adrienne."

DUCH. (*taking letter*) In excellent taste! None of us, I think, could write a letter better. May I keep it? I wonder no more that poor little D'Argental—(the son, I mean)—is in love with her.

AB. He has quite lost his head about her.

PRIN. It's in the family. The father, whom you know, with his old-fashioned wig and his coat of a century ago, went to Adrienne to ask her to restore the peace of mind of his son and—there, left his own.

DUCH. How lovely!

AB. And the story about the Bishop!

PRIN. There is a story about a Bishop?

AB. Yes. The Bishop met a charming young lady at the bedside of a sick woman he was visiting, and having offered

her his arm to see her to the door, found it was raining in torrents. He, therefore, insisted on her getting into the Episcopal carriage, and drove through Paris with—whom do you think? With Adrienne Lecouvreur!

DUCH. With Mademoiselle Lecouvreur?

AB. Hence the rumour that he was going to elope with her. The holy man was furious and threatened to excommunicate her at the first opportunity. She had, therefore, better not die at present.

DUCH. I hope she does not want to, just yet. And so I invite myself to-morrow night (*rises*) to see her, to hear her.

PRIN. Do come, and we will worship Mademoiselle Lecouvreur for your sake.

DUCH. Adieu, dear Princess. (*gets to door, followed by others, then stops and retraces her steps*) By-the-bye, do you know the latest news?

PRIN. Ah, no! The Abbé is my only purveyor of news, and he never knows anything.

DUCH. That young stranger in the French service who, last winter, turned the heads of all the ladies—the young son of the King of Poland and the Countess Koenigsmark—

PRIN. The Count de Saxe?

DUCH. He has returned to Paris.

AB. Excuse me, it is only a rumour, but I do not think it true.

DUCH. It is a fact. I know it from my cousin Bellisle, who was with him throughout the Courland campaign. You know we were very anxious about him, even frightened, that is to say the Duke, my husband, was—and I a little. But he has been in Paris since this morning. I have seen him, and he told me that his young General had returned with him.

PRIN. It would seem, therefore, that the General desires to conceal his return.

AB. Oh, very likely, on account of his debts. He has so many. To my knowledge he owes sixty thousand livres to a Swede, the Count Kalkreutz, who was going to have him arrested last year, but did not, because where there is nothing to take—

PRINCE. Even the King cannot collect his dues.

DUCH. The Abbé does not like M. de Saxe, and bears him a grudge because last year the General interrupted him in his march of conquest.

AB. You are wrong, Duchess. It is only that I cannot understand what the ladies can see in him to rave about; unless it be that he has the honour of being a son of the King of Poland.

PRINCE. That is certainly an introduction to success.

AB. To which he owes a great deal.

DUCH. No, no ! He owes everything to his courage, to his daring. At thirteen, he fought at Malplaquet, under the Prince Eugène. At fourteen, under Peter the Great, at Stralsund. Florestan told me all that.

PRIN. At fourteen ?

DUCH. And this is not all. During this last marvellous campaign, when he had been proclaimed Duke of Courland, the daughter of the Empress, the heiress of the Czars, conceived a strong attachment for him, which, one day, might have seated him on the throne of Russia.

PRIN. And, doubtless, dazzled by so brilliant a conquest, the Count did all he could——

DUCH. Not at all ! Florestan has told me that he did absolutely nothing to gain her favour. On the contrary, he frankly avowed to the Muscovite Princess that he had left his heart in Paris.

PRIN. Is this really so ?

DUCH. You see then that even Abbés are not always to be believed. Good-bye, Princess.

Enter SERVANT.

SER. The Count Maurice de Saxe. (*Exit SERVANT*)

DUCH. It seems that I am not to leave this house to-day.

Enter MAURICE.

AB. Duke of Courland, welcome !

DUCH. Welcome, conqueror !

PRIN. Future Emperor, welcome !

MAU. Oh yes, ladies. A duke without a duchy, a general without an army ; an emperor without subjects ; that is my position.

PRINCE. But the Estates of Courland have elected you their master.

MAU. Certainly ! Nominated by the Diet, proclaimed by the people, I have my patent of sovereignty in my pocket. But Russia forbade me to accept it, and threatened me with cannon,—and my father, the King of Poland, who wants to live in peace with his neighbours, ordered me to refuse it.

PRIN. And what did you do ?

MAU. I answered the Empress by calling the nobility of Courland to arms, and I wrote to my father saying that, before being elected sovereign, I was an officer in the service of the King of France, and that, not having been taught in the army of His Most Christian Majesty how to retreat, I would go ahead.

DUCH. Wonderful !

AB. There was no reply to that argument.

MAU. Of course not! And, therefore, without further ado, my father put me under the bann of the Empire. The Empress placed a price upon my head, and her General, Prince Mentzikoff, entered Mittau without a declaration of war, to take me by surprise in my palace. He had eighteen hundred Russians. I, not a soldier.

AB. Well, you had to surrender.

MAU. Not in the least!

PRIN. You defended yourself against such odds?

MAU. Yes. Like Charles XII. at Bender, seeing my palace surrounded by torches and men-at-arms, I exclaimed, "You want to play with powder and fire, very well, you shall have them." I called together the French gentlemen who had accompanied me. Besides them I had the people of my household, my secretary, my cook, six ostlers, and a young market woman who happened to be there.

AB. Women again! You have a way of your own in war.

MAU. Which would suit you exactly, my dear Abbé. We were sixty in all.

PRIN. Thirty to one against you.

MAU. That was nothing. We soon reduced the difference. I barricaded the doors with the furniture. At the windows I placed my people with their muskets and the young woman with several buckets of boiling water.

AB. So you had enlisted her too?

MAU. Of course! At so short a distance every shot of my men told, and soon disabled a hundred and twenty of the enemy. They therefore decided to storm the place. That was just what I wanted. Under the right pavilion, the only part where assault was possible, I had myself placed two barrels of gunpowder, and at the moment when three hundred Cossacks had penetrated into the palace, and were shouting hurrahs of victory, I blew them and half of the palace into the air together.

DUCH. And you?

MAU. I stood in the midst of the ruins and called the citizens of Mittau to arms. The bells commenced to toll all round, and the Russians retired in confusion. Oh, had I been able to pursue them! If I had had two French regiments—one only! But that is just what I have come here to obtain.

PRIN. And this is the object of your journey to Paris?

MAU. Yes, madam. I want the Cardinal de Fleury to give me a few squadrons of Hussars, and by Arminius, my patron saint, I hope next year, ladies, to be able to entertain you, royally, in the palace of the Dukes of Courland.

PRIN. In the meantime, I hope you will sometimes accept the hospitality of this house.

PRINCE. We receive to-morrow night. Will you come?

DUCH. (to MAURICE) You shall escort me. I shall be proud to have the victor of Mittau for my cavalier. Besides that, there is royal pleasure in store for you.

MAU. Your society, Duchess?

DUCH. You will hear Mademoiselle Lecouvreur. Do you know her, Count?

MAU. Yes, slightly——

DUCH. Admirable! (*clock strikes two*) Oh, two o'clock; and my husband is waiting for me to go to Versailles!

PRINCE. Since when?

DUCH. Since twelve.

PRIN. Not a bit too long.

DUCH. Are you coming with us, Abbé? We can offer you a seat.

PRINCE. Oh, no, he stays with me. I have to read him half of the last volume of my treatise.

AB. (*aside to PRINCESS*) Do you hear?

PRINCE. Impossible to put it off—the printer is waiting—the Abbé must come with me to my study.

(*Exeunt ABBÉ and PRINCE*)

DUCH. Adieu, gentlemen. (to PRINCESS) Poor Abbé! Adieu till to-morrow.

(*Exit DUCHESS, followed up by PRINCESS, who returns to MAURICE*)

PRIN. At last! For two months you have not written a line; I had to learn from the Duchess d'Aumont that you had returned, and I had almost given up the hope of seeing you.

MAU. You are the first person I have called upon, Princess. I arrived only last night.

PRIN. You have been nowhere but here?

MAU. I have been only to the War Office, where the Cardinal Secretary of State did not receive me too well, and gave me but little hope.

PRIN. Others have made amends for him then.

MAU. What do you mean?

PRIN. (*who from the beginning has kept her eyes fixed on the flowers in his button hole*) Did the Cardinal Secretary of State give you these roses?

MAU. I had forgotten. You notice everything.

PRIN. Who gave you these flowers?

MAU. Who? A flower girl—a pretty one, too. I met her at the gate, and she pleaded so earnestly——

PRIN. That you bought them for me?

MAU. Yes, Princess.

PRIN. A charming attention! I accept with pleasure.

(*aside*) It is too bad of him. (*aloud*) Although you do not deserve it, let us think of your interests first of all. You say that the Cardinal did not receive you too well, that he gave you but little encouragement.

MAU. Very little.

PRIN. We will change that. You shall have your two regiments.

MAU. If that were true!

PRIN. I will go to Versailles, and so that you may be kept informed of my progress——

MAU. I shall come here.

PRIN. No, not here. There are too many inquisitive eyes in this house, not to speak of my husband. No! The Prince has bought for Duclos a charming villa near the Grange Batelière, only a few paces from the walls. It is at my disposal, and there only I will see you.

MAU. In the house that belongs to——

PRIN. To my husband. What could be more natural? His house is mine.

MAU. Truly, Princess, only *you* could invent such a combination.

PRIN. Yes, it is rather clever. The appointments will be made by Mademoiselle Duclos. She will write to you, not I.

MAU. But do you not fear?

PRIN. Nothing. Duclos is devoted to me.

MAU. I understand. But as to myself? (*aside*) How can I accept it when I love another? No, better to tell her the truth. (*aloud*) I really do not know, Princess, how to thank you for your generosity.

PRIN. Another time—someone is coming. Who can it be? (*turning impatiently*) Oh, it is that horrid Abbé! Go now.

(*gives him her hand to kiss*)

MAU. (*aside*) Another time. (*aloud*) Adieu till then.

(*Exit*)

PRIN. (*with flowers*) A flower girl who ties her bouquets with cord of silk and gold. How uneasy, how cool he seemed! Like a man who has ceased to love. That passion which they spoke of just now, which made him refuse the daughter of the Czar—suppose it were not for me but for another! A rival! a favoured rival! But I must not lose my temper—I must not compromise myself—but I must know it. I will know it.

Enter ABBE with smelling-salts bottle.

AB. (*inhaling*) Sixty pages of chemistry! it's more than I can endure. I resign! (*looking towards PRINCESS*) Especially as there is not the slightest hope of indemnity.

PRIN. What makes you think so, Abbé?

AB. What do you mean?

PRIN. Hear! A lady friend of mine—an intimate friend——

AB. The Duchess d'Aumont?

PRIN. Perhaps—I mention no names—wishes passionately—as only a woman can desire—to discover a secret which is very closely kept.

AB. And that is?

PRIN. Who is the mysterious, unknown beauty whom the Count de Saxe loves at present—for there is one. You, Abbé, who know everything—who profess to know everything——

AB. Certainly.

PRIN. I thought you might perhaps unveil the mystery for her.

AB. It will be very difficult.

PRIN. I do not admit of such a word.

AB. But it will be difficult, especially for me, whom Dame Fortune seems to have quite deserted.

PRIN. Luck mostly follows skill. The cleverest are generally the most fortunate.

AB. And suppose I were clever enough to unravel this secret?

PRIN. Then perhaps might I disclose to you another which——

AB. Is it possible!

PRIN. You see you were wrong to complain. Help yourself and Heaven will help you! Everything now depends on yourself. Good-bye. *(Exit PRINCESS)*

AB. Am I dreaming? But how to do it? The Count de Saxe is discreet, I shall learn nothing from him. To whom then shall I apply?

Enter PRINCE during above speech.

PRINCE. Wonders will never cease! The Abbé is really thinking.

AB. Yes, I am. I am thinking over a problem that is not easy to solve.

PRINCE. A problem? That's my business.

AB. Oh, why not? Certainly, it is your business—in one sense.

PRINCE. Well, Abbé, what puzzles you?

AB. I was just thinking that the Count de Saxe, about whom the women are raving, must have a preference for some lady.

PRINCE. *(laughing)* Well, Abbé, and how does that concern you?

AB. But it does concern me, for reasons—important reasons—personal reasons. I cannot explain them to you

just now, but I must discover who is the reigning beauty.

PRINCE. (*good naturedly*) I will find it out for you.

AB. You ?

PRINCE. I. Yes ! At once ; this evening.

AB. Come now, that would be peculiar !

PRINCE. Will you bet two hundred louis about it ?

AB. (*aside*) It is a lot of money, but it's worth it. What do you intend to do ?

PRINCE. (*calling to SERVANT at door*) My carriage ! (*to ABBE*) Will you come to the Comédie Française with me ? Duclos and Lecouvreur both play in "Bajazet" to-night.

AB. With pleasure. But what has that to do with what I want to learn ?

PRINCE. Mademoiselle Duclos can tell you what you are so anxious to know. The other night as I was entering her room, they were speaking about De Saxe, and she said laughingly, "I know a great lady whom he adores." She stopped when she saw me, but you can understand, when I ask her—and you know she refuses me nothing—she will tell me the name of the lady, and then you shall know it too.

AB. Then you will tell it to me ! This will be worth more money than I can pay.

PRINCE. No ! It will be worth just two hundred louis. Now to the Comédie Française !

ACT DROP.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Green-room of the Comédie Française. Panelled oak "Louis XIV." Scene. Two doors, R.; one door leading to auditorium, door L. to the stage, shewing portion of the wings. Centre back occupied by large chimney-piece, surmounted by bust of Molière. Portraits and busts of other comedians all about the room. Large looking-glass, R. MADemoisELLE JOUVENOT in Turkish costume, arranging her dress before glass, R. MADemoisELLE DANGEVILLE in fancy costume. Other ACTORS and ACTRESSES in Turkish and fancy costumes. At a table, R., QUINAULT in the costume of Acumât, and POISSON in the costume of Crispin in "Bajazet," playing chess. Other ACTORS and ACTRESSES studying their parts and walking about. MICHONNET playing "Call for Rehearsal" on callboard.*

MDLLE. J. Michonnet, can you tell me where I can find some rouge ?

MICH. Yes, mademoiselle. In that drawer.

POIS. Michonnet !

MICH. Yes, M. Poisson !

POIS. Good house to-night ?

MICH. I should think so. Adrienne and Duclos play for the first time together in "Bajazet." There will be over five thousand livres.

POIS. The deuce there will !

MDLLE. D. Michonnet, when are you going to commence the second piece ?

MICH. At eight o'clock, mademoiselle.

QUIN. Michonnet !

MICH. Yes, M. Quinault.

QUIN. You won't forget my dagger, will you ?

MICH. It is all right. There it is, monsieur. (MICHONNET places it on table ; *aside*) When will it end ? Michonnet here ! Michonnet there ! Michonnet everywhere ! They won't give me a moment of peace. And whose fault is it ? Why mine ! What a fool I must have been to undertake to see everything right, even the hand-properties. But after all, I should not sleep well if anybody but I were to give Hippolite his sword, or Cleopatra her asp. To think of the wealth I distribute every night in rubies, and diamonds, and purses of gold—and my salary is fifteen hundred livres a year. What irony of fate ! I wouldn't mind if I were only a sociétaire ; not that it pays over well, but then one belongs to the Comédie Française. How well it would look on paper, Michonnet, Sociétaire of the Comédie Française. Instead of that I am a paid servant—first utility and principal prompter ! That is to say, obliged to do as they all bid me, and to swallow their insults.

MDLLE. J. Is Adrienne going to wear her diamonds this evening ?

Enter other ACTORS and ACTRESSES, ready to go on stage ; they move about.

MDLLE. D. Those that the Queen gave her ? (*goes up ; crosses to chess table*)

MDLLE. J. If what she says is true !

MICH. Ah, those diamonds ! They have made her many enemies.

MDLLE. J. Hardly worth while I should fancy. No great difficulty in getting diamonds !

MICH. No, not to you ladies !

MDLLE. J. What do you mean ?

MICH. Oh, nothing, mademoiselle, nothing. (*aside*) Ah, if you didn't belong to the Comédie Française ; if it were not convenient for me to make use of you to become a sociétaire myself one of these days, wouldn't I give you your answer—epigrammatically, sweetly, and well-peppered.

QUIN. Check, sir ! mate, sir ! You do not play well to-night, sir.

POIS. Just listen to this ; he is sirring me.

MDLLE. D. (*at chess table*) That is certainly very disrespectful.

POIS. Oh, I remember ! Since Mademoiselle Quinault, his sister, who played chambermaids with us, was married to the Duke de Nevers, he thinks himself a marquis at least. Come, say ! Perhaps you would like me to call you my lord ? You've only got to say so, you know.

QUIN. Enough, sir. (*to MICHONNET*) When are you going to begin ?

MICH. Don't fear ! I will let you know in good time. I'm the green-room clock.

MDLLE. J. And a clock that's never late. (*up, R.C.*)

MICH. True ! The slightest break in the performance makes me uncomfortable, and when the house is shut for a day I feel that I have lost twenty-four hours of my existence. (*enter PRINCE and ABBE by D.L., coming from the house. MADemoisELLE DANCEVILLE, MADemoisELLE JOUVENOT, and other LADIES at back; MICHONNET in front*) It is tiresome ! More strangers to fill up the green-room and block up the wings ! (*PRINCE and ABBE have gone C. to the LADIES, and are speaking to them. MICHONNET recognises them and salutes*) Ah ! His Reverence the Abbé de Chazeuil and his Highness of Bouillon ! When I think that that man could, by a single word, procure my nomination, I can't help looking upon him with respect. Michonnet ! Michonnet ! you are a ruffian, you who were just now speaking so bitterly of those ladies and their diamonds. Would you sell your self-respect for a title. Ah ! but then it is the Comédie Française.

AB. (*to QUINAULT*) Good evening, Vizier ; they tell me that you will play admirably in "Bajazet."

PRINCE. And so will Mademoiselle Duclos.

MICH. And Adrienne—she will be sublime.

QUIN. Yes, she has got on the right way at last, and it was not easy. I am not addicted to boasting, but there is not an emphasis, or accentuation in her part that I have not taught her.

MICH. Well, I never !

QUIN. What was that ?

MICH. Oh, nothing, nothing ! (*aside*) That's another who has a vote, or else wouldn't I ! Ah, there is Adrienne coming from her dressing-room. Here she is.

AB. Yes. She is studying her part.

MICH. Quite alone. (*looking at QUINAULT*) Without M Quinault. It is strange !

Enter ADRIENNE, L. 2 E., studying.

AD. (*reading her part*)

"I recognise the reign of Sultan Amurat."

"Now leave me! Let the palace gates be closed at once."

No, that isn't right—

"Now leave me! Let the palace gates be closed at once!

In their accustomed order let all men return."

AB. (L. c.) Magnificent!

AD. (R. c.) Ah, the Abbé de Chazeuil.

PRINCE. Superb!

MDLLE. J. (R. of table) Are you speaking of the diamonds?

PRINCE. You mean those that belonged to the Queen? Yes, they are very handsome, and I shall be happy to give Mademoiselle Lecouvreur sixty thousand livres for them, should she care to sell them. And so you are still studying. What are you trying to learn?

AD. Truth!

AB. (*looking at QUINAULT*) But you have had lessons from a great master?

(QUINAULT rises, about to go)

MICH. (*to QUINAULT, who is trying to leave*) There is no hurry, M. Quinault. Do stay! You are not wanted for a long while yet on the stage.

AB. (*to ADRIENNE*) The part of Roxana, for instance.

AD. Unfortunately I had none. (*seeing MICHONNET*) But I am wrong in saying that I had had no teacher. I was about to be ungrateful to him. A man of true heart; a sincere and disinterested friend, whose counsel has ever guided me, whose encouragement has never failed me. Here he is; and I am never sure of success until I have heard his kind, honest voice say, "Yes, that's it; that's right!"

MICH. Oh, Adrienne, this is too much! I am choking.

AB. (R. c.) How is it, M. Michonnet, that you, who give such good advice, are yourself—

MICH. Such a bad actor? That's what you mean, sir, is it not? Well, I have often asked myself that question. I really think it must be because I am not a sociétaire of the Comédie Française.

Enter CALL-BOY, R. D.

CALL-BOY. Beginners please, ladies and gentlemen.

(*Exit, R. D.*)

QUIN. The ladies are not ready yet, of course.

AD. I am.

MDLLE. D. I also, although I only play in the second piece. (*sits up. L. c.*)

QUIN. But Mademoiselle Duclos?

MICH. She was dressed a quarter of an hour ago. She was writing in her dressing-room.

PRINCE. (R. C.) She was writing then?

MICH. (C.) Yes, and she seemed to be in a great hurry.

PRINCE. I wonder to whom?

MDLLE. J. (*aside to PRINCE*) I'll tell you. Her maid—

PRINCE. Penelope?

MDLLE. J. Yes, Penelope. She shewed me a letter just now, saying, "Here is a scrap of paper to read which the Prince would give a good deal."

PRINCE. I?

MDLLE. J. That made me think it could not be for you, but it's only a supposition. I wonder whom that letter could have been written to?

PRINCE. I will soon find out. I will ask Penelope. (*aside to ABBE*) I am going to attend to your business now.

AB. How kind of you! Where shall I meet you?

PRINCE. Here, after the third act.

AB. Agreed!

MICH. Mademoiselle Jouvenot, M. Quinault, you are wanted.

Exeunt QUINAULT and LADIES ; QUINAULT is being hurried by MICHONNET.

QUIN. (*to ABBE*) After you, sir.

AB. After your Turkish Excellency.

(*Exeunt ABBE and QUINAULT*)

PRINCE. (*aside*) I always mistrusted that little Penelope. It is an unlucky name, especially in a theatre. (*Exit, D.R.*)

MICHONNET *crosses behind table to L.C.*

MICH. To think that she is so good to me, and that for five years I have never found courage to avow what I feel for her. It's quite natural, though; she is a *sociétaire*, and I am not; she is young and I am not—and then to-day always seems to me to be an unlucky day, and I wait until to-morrow, and to-morrow never comes. Oh, but then her heart is free, she loves only her profession. (*to ADRIENNE*) Still studying your part?

AD. Yes, Michonnet.

MICH. Well, if I don't disturb you, I have been wanting to tell you something for ever so long.

AD. To me?

MICH. Yes. My uncle the grocer is dead.

AD. I am very sorry.

MICH. I am his heir. He has left me ten thousand livres.

AD. Oh, then I am glad.

MICH. Now that I have got the money, I don't know what to do with it, and I am bothered about it.

AD. Then I am sorry again.

MICH. No cause for that, because it has given me an idea which would never have struck me otherwise. Marriage!

AD. You are right! I would do the same if I could.

MICH. Really! Would you?

AD. Have you not remarked that everybody says of late "What a change in Adrienne's talent?"

MICH. True! It is greater than ever. Last night you played Phèdre as you never did before.

AD. Ah! I was suffering that day, I was so unhappy. One's fortune does not bring many such evenings.

MICH. And the reason?

AD. They were all speaking of a battle, and I had no news of him. Perhaps he was wounded, killed perchance; my heart was full of its measure of fear, of pain, of despair. Oh, how I suffered! My every expression, that evening, was real, I was not acting then. And now I know how to exhibit every feeling—even joy—for I have seen him again.

MICH. Then you love someone?

AD. How can I conceal it from you, my best, my dearest friend?

MICH. But—but how did it happen?

AD. It was the night of the ball at the Opera. As I was leaving, some young officers, who could not have been sober, attempted to prevent me from entering my carriage. I was much frightened, when a young man, whose face was totally unknown to me, sprang to my rescue. "Gentlemen," he cried, "for shame, this is Mademoiselle Lecouvreur. Give way!" Their only reply was insulting laughter. But quicker than thought my protector flung them aside, and taking me in his arms placed me in my coach. The officers were furious. They drew their swords and all four of them shouted. "You will give us satisfaction, sir." "Willingly," he replied, and in another moment his weapon flashed against the four blades of his adversaries. I uttered a cry, but he said calmly, "Fear nothing, mademoiselle, you will be in a private box for once, and the actors will be in front of you." I was so overcome with terror that my eyes seemed rivetted upon him, and when I saw him, as in play, parrying the thrusts of those four swords, each directed towards his breast, I recognised the arm and courage of a hero. He did not retire a step; a moment more and he stood no longer on the defence, he was attacking. Then, attracted by the noise of the crowd, the watchmen arrived from all sides, and my aggressors, thoroughly ashamed, slunk silently away, leaving my protector master of the field. Say, was he not a hero?

MICH. And you have seen him since?

AD. Yes! The next morning. How could I prevent him from calling upon me to inquire after my health? He told me that he was a foreign officer in the French service, whose only hope to gain fortune, title, a name even, was his courage. This was his surest passport to my heart. Had he been rich or noble, I should not have cared for him; but he was poor—struggling—dreaming, like myself, of love and glory. How could I resist him?

MICH. It was fate.

AD. Three months ago he left France to seek his fortune with the young Count de Saxe, his countryman; this morning he returned. His first visit was to me. His General, however, and the Secretary of State, required so much of his time that he could stay only a few moments; but he promised me to come here, to-night, to the theatre.

MICH. He will come!

AD. To see me play Roxana. (*crosses, L., and sits R. of L.T.*)

MICH. (*excitedly*) And what a state you are in! All this nervousness! This excitement! You will not be able to put any finish to your acting; all detail will be wanting.

AD. Well, what of that?

MICH. What of it? Are you not playing against Duclos for the first time to-night?

AD. Fear nothing!

MICH. But I do fear. Calm and presence of mind are necessary even with inspiration. Duclos will calculate every syllable—every step. And you! You will see only him.

AD. True! If I can see him amongst the audience——

MICH. Then all will be lost. Now, there's a good girl, think only of your part. Love passes away, but a fine creation—a great triumph remains to be remembered ever after. Come now. (*kneels at her feet*) Can't you give up thinking of him for a while?

AD. Alas, no!

MICH. (*sits at her feet*) Do for this evening, at least! Adrienne, my child, be great! I pray of you—if not for my sake—well, let it be for his! The love of man is only egotism, and if Duclos were to triumph over you——

AD. She will not.

MICH. Thank you, my child! Thank you!

AD. No, it is I who should thank you, my kind friend.

MICH. (*aside*) Say rather you old fool of a Michonnet. (*about to go, R., returns*) There is one line which you never get quite right, "Have I risked my all but for a rival's gain?" You see, Adrienne, that that poor woman is so embittered by the idea that her rival wins by what she has done, you know

—that she feels—that she says to herself—well, I can't give the expression—but you know what I mean.

AD. "Have I risked my all but for a rival's gain?"

MICH. That's it! That's it! Excellent!

AD. You see! But you—you were saying a little while ago about marriage?

MICH. It is useless now; some other time. I leave you to study your part. (*aside*) Adrienne is not for me. My dream is over. (*to ADRIENNE*) Don't forget to drink a glass of water before going on the stage; and be sure—you know—the way you said it just now. "All, all for a rival's gain." Ah, you don't know what it is to have a rival.

(*Exit*)

Enter MAURICE, D. L. 3 E.

AD. "My deep laid schemes, intrigues, e'en treason's fatal stain,—

Ah, have I risked my all but for a rival's gain?"

MAU. Then this is the green-room of the Comédie Française with its glorious memories. It is grand. One feels something like veneration in coming here for the first time. I hope nobody will recognise me—not even Adrienne. She little suspects who I am. (*L.*)

AD. Maurice!

MAU. Adrienne!

AD. You here?

MAU. Yes, I was one of the first to enter the house. I found the pass door and asked to see you. I told the doorkeeper that I was a friend of yours, and that you were expecting me. The magic sound of your name was my key, and you see that I am here.

AD. How imprudent! You compromised me.

MAU. Compromised you! how? Only the great noblemen, who pass to and fro in this house by virtue of their gold, seem to have the right to be near you, to admire you. Poor devils like myself are left to wipe their eyes in the dark corners of the theatre, when you make their hearts beat with sympathy. And so I should have been had I not resorted to this little subterfuge. To be so near you and yet so far away, was more than I could bear. I should have been condemned to wait until the performance was over to tell you, "Adrienne, I love you!"

AD. Hush! I shall have to be on the stage in a few moments! But before you go let us speak of yourself. Tell me what you have done. Do you bring me the records of some heroic deeds? Ah, how heavenly it must be to be great—to have all the world heralding the fame of your valour!

MAU. If that were only so!

AD. Tell me, your young General, the Count de Saxe, of

whom everybody speaks so well, and whom I should so much like to see, is he satisfied with you ?

MAU. The Count de Saxe is still more difficult to please than I am, but I never left him and I have been wounded.

AD. By his side ?

MAU. Yes, as near him as possible.

AD. Brave boy ! The mere thought of knowing you were wounded makes me shudder ; but still, I know that you have been but doing your duty, that you are following the broad road to fame. Ah, I have already seen you, sword in hand, your face aglow with proud defiance, and when you will relate to me, with a smile upon your lips, your deeds of daring, I shall feel sure—and you need not smile at the prophecy—that one day you will be great, for you are already a hero.

MAU. You are a child, Adrienne.

AD. But I am right, for you will be great.

MAU. Indeed !

AD. You will. I know how to make you.

MAU. And how ?

AD. I will so praise the Count de Saxe, with whom all the ladies are in love, that you will be compelled to emulate him, if only through jealousy.

MAU. I shall never be jealous of him.

AD. How presumptuous ! Have you seen the Secretary of State ?

MAU. Not yet ; but I am going to write to him.

AD. Oh, don't !

MAU. Why ?

AD. You know—your spelling——

MAU. Well, what of that ?

AD. What of it ? Your first letter was very charming, full of tenderness and love, and touched my heart. But all the same, it made me laugh through my tears ! your spelling was so original.

MAU. But I am not a candidate for the Academy.

AD. That would not prevent your election. But you know I promised to be your tutor.

MAU. And I have not forgotten your lessons. How I have tried to get those scenes from Corneille into my head !

AD. You did think of Corneille, then, in the midst of battle ?

MAU. Not of him ; but of her who interpreted him so divinely.

AD. And the little volume of Lafontaine's Fables I gave you at parting ?

MAU. It never left me. I kept it here, near my heart—once it saved my life. See where the bullet struck it. My guardian angel had given it to me.

AD. Your guardian angel ! Perhaps ; for my prayers were ever with you. Did you read it at all ?

MAU. Well, to speak the truth, I am afraid I have not.

AD. What ? Not even the fable of the two pigeons that I so particularly mentioned ?

MAU. Not even that—forgive me ! You see it was only fable after all.

AD. Only a fable ! Ah, you shall hear ! Listen !

(reads)

“Two pigeons were lovers both tender and true.”

MAU. Like you and I.

AD. “When one of them tired of home,
Resolved to leave sweetheart, and all whom he
knew.

Afar, amongst strangers, to roam.”

MAU. Like myself.

AD. “The other then said with a piteous tear,
Oh, brother, do not go away ; [hold dear,
For absence from those whom we love and
Is pain that no leech can allay.”

(speaks) Not to you, cruel one.

MAU. That last line is not in the fable, I know.*

*NOTE.—Madame Modjeska does not speak Mr. Herman's version of the “Fable,” but the following :—

AD. (reads) “Two pigeons once, as brother, brother
With sweet affection loved each other.”

MAU. Like you and I.

AD. “But one of them, tired of home,
Resolved in distant lands to roam.”

MAU. Like me.

AD. “Then the other said, with piteous tear,
‘What, brother ! would you leave me here ?
Of all ills that on earth we owe,
Absence from loved ones is bitterest woe.’ ”
(speaking) But not to you cruel one.

MAU. That last line is not in the fable, I know.

AD. “And oh ! at least for springtide wait ;
I heard a crow on a neighbouring tree
Just now, predicting an awful fate
For some wretched bird ; and I foresee
Falcons and snares awaiting thee.
What more can you want than what you've got—
A friend, a good dwelling, and a wholesome cot
And all the rest.”

MAU. Yes, the rest. What is it ? &c., &c.

AD. “Then united once more and safe from blows,
The brothers forgot their recent woes.
Oh, happy lovers, never separate, I pray.
But by the nearest rivulet your wandering footsteps stay.
Let each unto the other be a world that's ever fair,
Ever varied, young, and debonair,
Let each be dear to each, and as nothing count the rest.”

AD. "Say, have you not all that your heart can desire,
A home, and good food, and the rest—"

MAU. Yes, the rest! What is it?

AD. So it does interest you, sir? Now you see I might inflict upon you the long story of all the mishaps that befell the wanderer, I might even tell you of the broken heart of the one that stayed at home. But you shall only hear the moral:

"Do, lovers, ne'er wander from those who love you,

But think one another the fairest of fair.

The image that's limned on the heart remains true.

What's seen by the eye often fades into air."

MAU. It makes all the difference when you read it. It is not Lafontaine, it is inspiration.

AD. For shame!

MAU. It is Lafontaine altered for the better. My heart opens at the sound of your voice, and everything seems to become easy to me.

AD. Everything? Even spelling?

MAU. Yes, even spelling. When shall I take my first lesson?

AD. To-night after the play. But you will make me keep the stage waiting. I am very near my entrance.

MAU. Adieu then.

AD. You will see me act?

MAU. I shall be there.

AD. Be sure to let me see you, that my glance may meet yours—that I may address my speeches to you—that you may inspire me. I will do my best to triumph. Ah, yes, I know I shall triumph. *(Exit)*

MAU. Dear Adrienne! *(following)* Ah, who is that? The Prince. He must not see me here. *(Exit)*

*Enter PRINCE DE BOUILLON and MADemoisELLE JOUVENOT;
PRINCE with letter.*

PRINCE. (C.) Thank you, mademoiselle, thank you! I shall never forget the service you have rendered me.

MDLLE. J. It was true then?

PRINCE. Only too true.

MDLLE. J. Lucky chance! I am delighted to have afforded you some gratification.

PRINCE. Oh, you call it gratification, do you? Well, perhaps, yes. I have for a long time been seeking some pretext to break off my connection with Duclos.

MDLLE. J. Why did you not say so before?

PRINCE. What, mademoiselle?

Enter ABBE, R.

PRINCE Ah, it is you, Abbé.

(Exit MADemoisELLE JOUVENOT, R.D.)

PRINCE. I have been successful ; or rather you have been successful.

AB. Well ?

PRINCE. You know our bet of two hundred louis about De Saxe.

AB. De Saxe ! I met him in the passage just now. He had evidently just left this room.

PRINCE. An additional proof ! I wish I had met him.

AB. You will find him in Box 3.

PRINCE. By-and-bye for that ! You wanted to know the name of his lady-love ?

AB. And who is it ?

PRINCE. I had not to go far to discover it. You may pay the wager.

AB. Well, who is it ?

PRINCE. Read this ; it will open your eyes as it did mine. It is not long—neither is it sweet—but it is to the point.

AB. (*reading*) "For political reasons which you know very well, I shall be glad to meet you, *tête-à-tête*, at ten o'clock to-night at my villa at the Grange Batelière. Love and discretion.—Signed, CONSTANCE."

PRINCE. The signature of that faithless Duclos.

AB. Her name is Constance then ?

PRINCE. Yes, but the name matters not. I had the note from her maid, Penelope.

AB. She gave it to you, then ?

Enter CALL-BOY.

PRINCE. She sold it to me and at a good price too. (*to CALL-BOY, who crosses at back*) Take this note to Box 3. Do not say who gave it to you. (*exit CALL-BOY, L.D.*) And now, my dear Abbé, I rely on you.

AB. In what way ?

PRINCE. (*excitedly*) I owe it to my princely dignity to make a fearful row to-night, and you shall help me. We will go to her house and smash everything.

AB. I think that would be in bad taste for an Abbé, and totally against all principles of science.

PRINCE. She betrayed science in me.

AB. Science must know how to keep her secrets. A soldier like the Count de Saxe may make as much noise as he likes ; but you, a near relation of the Queen—a married man ! why our world would laugh at you.

PRINCE. All our world will laugh any way. The Théâtre Français is not a conservatory of secrets. There is Mademoiselle Jouvenot. You would swear she had not seen a soul

since I told her. And yet I feel as though she had related the story to a dozen people.

AB. Well, anticipate her. Tell it to everybody yourself, or better still—a revenge worthy of yourself! The two lovers arranged to pass this evening *tête-à-tête* in that little villa which really belongs to you.

PRINCE. I should think so. Have I not bought it, and furnished it regardless of expense?

AB. So much the better! I should treat it as my own house; give a fine supper there to-night, and invite all the company of the Théâtre Français. All the ladies especially.

PRINCE. A supper! Splendid idea! delicious!

AB. My money, you know, will pay for it. I lost the wager.

PRINCE. True.

AB. Instead of the expected *tête-à-tête*—surprise! A splendid effect, as they say on the stage! Mythological tableau!

PRINCE. Mars and Venus—

AB. Surprised! Comedietta in one act, with a vengeance for a moral. Go, issue your invitations.

PRINCE. Right! Above all, keep the secret from Duclos and our play will be eminently successful. (*applause outside*) Why that's for Lecouvreur! Bravo! It seems the hour of triumph has already come.

MICHONNET runs in.

MICH. Yes! It has come, Adrienne's triumph! Do you hear how they are applauding? Go on! Bravo! Bravo, Adrienne! Duclos is nowhere.

PRINCE. Bravo! Bravo!

MICH. He is actually applauding her.

PRINCE. Bravo! Bravo, Adrienne Lecouvreur! We will get a bouquet—a dozen bouquets! Come along, Abbé, Duclos shall be mad with jealousy.

(*Exeunt PRINCE and ABBÉ*)

MICH. (*looking after him*) She's conquered even him. He has evidently more taste than I gave him credit for. (*goes to door*) Now she is at the monologue. What a breathless silence! What a hold she has over them! (*as if hearing her speak*) That's good! that's good! No, not so fast, my darling Adrienne. That's good! that's better! What style! How natural! Applaud, idiots. Why don't you applaud? Splendid! she is divine! (*applause outside*) It is evident he is in the house; she has seen him. And to think that she is acting to him; to think that she sees only him at this moment, that his glance inspires her genius! It is fearful! (*listening*) How splendidly that line was

delivered. I am going mad, I think. I am laughing—crying—I think I shall die with grief—and with joy—I am forgetting everything—even my jealousy. (*looking round him*) Yes. even my hand-properties. Where is Zatima's letter? I saw it a moment ago. Surely I have not lost it. I wonder where it can be. (*looks in table drawer*)

Enter MAURICE.

MAU. I wish the Duchy of Courland were—

MICH. Ah, perhaps in this drawer. (*finding letter*)

MAU. I shall miss my appointment with Adrienne. On the other hand what am I to do about this note which Duclos has sent me in the name of the Princess? How on earth did she discover me in that box? I can't keep her waiting all night away from home, especially as she comes to bring me news from the Secretary of State. If I could only see Adrienne—if I could only tell her—(*goes towards stage*)

MICH. Where are you going to, sir?

MAU. I want to speak to Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

MICH. Impossible, sir, she is on the stage.

MAU. When will she leave it?

MICH. She will never leave it if I can help it.

MAU. (*aside*) Another mishap. (*to MICHONNET*) I wish you would tell her, sir—

MICH. Excuse me, I am very busy just now.

(*pushes MAURICE up, c.*)

Enter QUINAULT, E.

QUIN. My dagger! Quick! My dagger!

MICH. My dear M. Quinault, would you mind giving to Zatima this letter for Roxana?

QUIN. I, sir? You are joking, sir. Whom do you take me for, sir?

MICH. I beg your pardon. Surely you won't mind telling Mademoiselle Jouvenot not to go on the stage without the letter which is on this table.

QUIN. Very well, sir. She shall be told!

(*Exit, R. to stage. MAURICE goes to table. MICHONNET follows QUINAULT, laughing*)

MICH. His High and Mightiness the Grand Vizier is not in good humour. Roxana is too much for him. (*goes to door*) Ah, there is Duclos. You may try whatever you like, poor girl. Your sing-song won't do any more. It's old fashioned, it's all over with you; you're beaten.

(*MAURICE sits at table; takes the parchment which MICHONNET has placed there, and opens it*)

MAU. What, not a word written on it! By Jove! all is fair in love and war. That line will explain. (*writes a few lines in pencil and replaces parchment*)

MICH. (*still listening*) Ah, there is Adrienne again. How sweet her voice is. If I were a *sociétaire* perhaps I would play the lovers. I should be playing "Bajazet," and she would say to me "I love you." One is always young and handsome when one is a *sociétaire* of the *Comédie Française*.

Enter MADEMOISELLE JOUVENOT hastily, R. D.

MDLLE. J. (*crosses to table, R.*) Where is my letter, Michonnet? My letter to Roxana?

MICH. Here, on this table. Did not M. Quinault tell you?

MDLLE. J. No. You know he wouldn't stoop to do a kindness for the world.

MAU. (*gives parchment*) Here it is, mademoiselle.

MDLLE. J. Thanks, monsieur. What a handsome young officer! Very handsome!

MICH. You will miss your cue, mademoiselle.

(*hurrying her*)

MDLLE. J. I am going.

(*Exit, R.*)

MAU. The fates have been propitious! She'll have the paper—she will know that I can't come this evening. Oh, my Duchy of Courland, you are costing me very dear.

(*Exit, L.*)

MICH. Ah, there is Zatima. She gives Roxana the letter. Heavens! What an effect! Adrienne is trembling; she seems hardly able to stand. Admirable! Beautiful! (*applause outside*) There is the curtain. Yes, applaud! Don't be afraid to damage your hands! Bravo! bravo!

Enter ADRIENNE hurriedly, with letter.

AD. Where is he?

MICH. He? Who?

AD. The gentleman who wrote this note?

MICH. This note? What note?

AD. These lines on my letter. (*hands MICHONNET letter*)

MICH. Why, it's Zatima's letter to Roxana! (*reads*) "I cannot come this evening, my darling. Duties which I cannot explain, prevent me. I have only a moment to write this line. 'Till to-morrow, dearest.—MAURICE." How on earth did he manage this? Never mind, though; you succeeded to-night.

Enter QUINAULT, POISSON, MADEMOISELLE JOUVENOT, MADEMOISELLE DANGEVILLE, PRINCE, and ABBE,
R. 1 E. ACTORS and ACTRESSES.

AB. Let me congratulate you, mademoiselle.

PRINCE. You were sublime, mademoiselle. Allow me to pay my homage at the shrine of genius.

MICH. Courage, my child, here is everybody congratulating you on your triumph.

AD. My triumph ! and he did not stay to see it ! Ah ! away tears ! Well, Prince, you were saying—

PRINCE. I am desirous of celebrating your success to-night by a supper. I have invited most of the ladies and gentlemen of the Théâtre Français ; but our company would be incomplete without you, Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

AD. I know not how to thank you ; but I am not inclined to pleasure this evening.

AB. (L.) So much more reason to join our gaiety. A charming supper, where you will meet the very best people—in arts. (*points to ACTORS*) At court. (*points to PRINCE*) Among the clergy, (*points to himself*) and in the army. The young Count de Saxe will be with us. He is the hero of the evening.

AD. Oh, I am so anxious to see the Count de Saxe.

PRINCE. Indeed ?

AD. I wish to ask a favour of him—to intercede with him for a young lieutenant whom I wish to make a captain.

AB. We will place you next to the Count at supper, and before the dessert is brought in your friend will be a colonel.

AD. Your offer is very tempting. But where am I to go to ? I have no one to escort me.

AB. { May I ?

PRINCE. {

AD. Ah, no, thanks.

PRINCE. Well, then come alone—you know Duclos' little villa.

AD. Yes. What a lovely garden she has.

PRINCE. Her garden faces yours. Here is the key of the garden gate ; it is only a few steps.

AD. That is an inducement certainly.

AB. You accept then ?

AD. I have not said so yet.

PRINCE. M. Michonnet, will he accompany you ?

MICH. With pleasure, Prince, that is to say, as soon as I have made all arrangements for to-morrow's performance. (*aside, looking at ADRIENNE*) I shall be near her.

AD. (*aside*) Yes, I will try to advance his interests. He shall see that I have not forgotten him—the ungrateful man, that shall be my revenge.

(CALL-BOY, *outside*)

CALL-BOY. Beginners for the second act.

MICH. Beginners, ladies and gentlemen. (*to PRINCE and ABBE, who are surrounded by LADIES*) I am very sorry but I

shall have to send your Highness and your Reverence away. (*separates them from the ACTORS*) You will keep the stage waiting. (*to PRINCE*) That way, monseigneur, if you please. (*Exeunt omnes except ADRBINNE and MICHONNET*) And now to commence the act.

(*Exit, R. D. Three knocks heard outside, R.*)

AD. No, this is not a letter from one who is faithless. The loving hand that traced it is visible in every stroke. "Till to-morrow, dearest, Maurice."—(*kisses letter*) Maurice! As I breathe the name, soft zephyrs seem to waft the echoes back to my heart. Maurice, my love! Ah! If it is only a dream, then let me dream. I am so happy.

Enter MICHONNET, R. D.

MICH. Adrienne! Adrienne! It is near your entrance. (*touches her; she takes no notice*) Come, Adrienne, it is near your cue.

AD. Yes, yes. (*recovering as if from a dream*) I am going.

ACT DROP.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*An elegant salon in the house at the Grange Batelière, c. doors back. A sliding panel door, D. R. Door, L., window, R. PRINCESS discovered.*

PRIN. I am waiting. I, a Princess de Bouillon, am actually being kept waiting. I cannot disguise the fact—I am being kept waiting. Duclos sent me word that Maurice had received her note; that he was in a box at the theatre—alone. Alone? I am not so sure that that is true. I hurried here, and he perhaps, keeps me in suspense for another. (*clock strikes*) Eleven o'clock! Count! Count! Last year you were always the first to arrive; now you are more than an hour late. I hurried hither to serve you, and you allow me time to reflect that I could also ruin you if I chose to, since your political fortune is in my hands. You are more than ungrateful, you are foolish.

Enter MAURICE.

PRIN. Oh, at last!

MAU. A thousand pardons, Princess.

PRIN. No excuses, pray! Another might, perhaps, think of her injured dignity; I am only calculating the time I have lost without seeing you. At midnight I must be back home

again. I have been to Versailles, as I promised you, and the Queen has interceded for you with the Cardinal.

MAU. How good of you! (*kisses her hand*)

PRIN. The Secretary of State gives you permission to raise the two regiments at your own expense.

MAU. Hurrah!

PRIN. Madman! Have you any money?

MAU. No!

PRIN. How will you pay your soldiers then?

MAU. I shall not pay them at all, except after a victory. They are quite willing to get killed for me on credit.

PRIN. But you owe the Count Kalkreutz sixty thousand livres on a promissory note.

MAU. What of that?

PRIN. Most dangerous! The Russian ambassador has set the police on your track. And that is not all. Your Russian friend is trying his utmost to discover the whereabouts of M. de Kalkreutz.

MAU. And for what purpose?

PRIN. To buy your promissory note, and to become your creditor so as to be able to have you thrown into prison.

MAU. That would be gentlemanly conduct, indeed.

PRIN. It would be a stroke of genius. While you are a prisoner, the Russians could do what they liked in Courland.

MAU. That's true! What's to be done?

PRIN. The Chief of Police has promised to inform me of M. de Kalkreutz's address the moment he has news. Then you will go and see your creditor.

MAU. To fight him?

PRIN. No, to make some arrangement. The simplest would be to pay him.

MAU. And how? I have not sixty thousand livres.

PRIN. And, alas, neither have I.

MAU. Besides that, I would not accept them from you. There is only one other way.

PRIN. And that is?

MAU. To leave Russia, Sweden, and the police to fight it out amongst themselves. I leave to-morrow.

PRIN. But surely you cannot want to leave Paris so soon. The least thing you could do would be to stop a few days, that you might recompense me for all I have risked for your sake.

MAU. I should be ungrateful indeed if I were not frank with you. I do not understand deception. This morning I intended to confess——

PRIN. That you love another. Whom?

MAU. One, perhaps, not to be compared to you.

PRIN. But whom? Answer! You do not know what I am capable of when I am roused.

MAU. Why should I not tell you loyally the truth ? I have never seen a more charming woman than yourself, nor one whom it was more difficult to resist—and why ? Because the charms by which you held your admirers were garlands of flowers ; they were so graceful, so delicate that they seemed made for adornment, but not for bondage.

PRIN. Maurice !

MAU. You know the stipulations of our Platonic treaty ? Our intimacy was to be a sort of pastime, not a serious engagement. You reserved the right to break it at will, and that was only just ; but where there is no oath of fidelity, there can be no perjury. I should be a villain if I ever wanted in friendship, in gratitude to you ; but in all other respects Princess, I think I am free.

PRIN. Free to betray me ? We shall see. I will know her. Should I have to ruin you to ruin her, I would do so.

MAU. Hush ! Do you hear that noise in the garden ?

PRIN. The sound of wheels !

MAU. Do you expect anybody ?

PRIN. Of course not. Mademoiselle Duclos is the only person who could come, and she would not dare, knowing I am here. Heavens ! It is my husband !

MAU. Impossible !

PRIN. It is the Prince. I am sure I recognised him. But he is not alone ; others are with him.

MAU. I can hear them. They are coming up the staircase.

PRIN. I am lost ! My reputation will be ruined. They are coming. (*points to door, L.*) Ah, that door. (*rushes to door, L.*)

MAU. Where does it lead to ?

PRIN. To a small boudoir. (*rushes out, D. R.*)

Enter PRINCE and ABBE.

PRINCE. Ah, we have caught you, Count.

MAU. You here, gentlemen ?

PRINCE. I saw the lady ! I saw her !

MAU. You are jesting.

PRINCE. No, not at all ! I caught sight of a flowing robe—just as it slipped through the door. Ah, ah ! Saxony attacking France.

MAU. What do you mean ?

AB. That we know a.l, my dear Count. And such an affair must not pass in silence. We want noise—plenty of witnesses——

MAU. (*to PRINCE*) I should have thought, Prince, that it would be to your interest to avoid publicity ; but since you desire it—since you know——

PRINCE. Everything—I have proofs.

MAU. Well, I am at your service. If the Abbé will consent, notwithstanding his cloth, to be our witness—I think there is a garden here—we can just step down stairs.

PRINCE. At this hour?

MAU. All hours will do for fighting.

AB. That is just where you are wrong, Count; we are not speaking of fighting. With a magnanimity which is hardly ever equalled on the stage, the Prince is willing that you should retain your conquest, on the condition that the treaty of peace be ratified here by a supper.

MAU. Gentlemen, you are laughing.

AB. I should think so.

PRINCE. It is my interest to prove to Duclos—

MAU. (*aside*) He thinks it is Duclos.

PRINCE. That I don't care for her a bit.

AB. And that France and Saxony are not going to fight about her a little bit.

PRINCE. Ha, ha, ha! It will be fun. But you're not laughing—you seem puzzled.

MAU. Yes, I was at first, but now I see—a capital joke.

PRINCE. Is it not? To carry off Duclos—with my consent, as an act of friendship.

AB. And now, as allies, you must shake hands.

MAU. Certainly.

AB. And as it will be necessary to have to conform to legality for the ratification of the treaty, I will fetch the notary of the Comédie Française and a lot of witnesses.

(*Exit, C. D.*)

MAU. What does he say?

PRIN. Ah! You have no idea of the brilliant society you will meet in my house, or rather in yours, for to-night you are the master—the hero of the evening—the celebration is in your honour.

MAU. You are too kind.

PRIN. And I have another surprise for you. A charming young lady is anxious to make your acquaintance, and the Abbé, who is our master of ceremonies, is gone to fetch her, to introduce you to her before supper.

MAU. You do me infinite honour. (*aside*) If I could only set the poor prisoner free.

PRIN. (*at c. door*) Come, mademoiselle, the Count de Saxe is awaiting you impatiently.

Enter ABBE and ADRIENNE.

PRINCE. Mademoiselle, you are trembling!

AD. I always do in the presence of great men.

PRINCE. Mademoiselle Lecouvreur, allow me to present to you (*MAURICE turns round quickly*) the Count de Saxe.

MAU. Heavens !

AD. The Count de Saxe ? It is not possible !

MAU. (*whispers*) Silence !

PRINCE. What is the matter ?

AD. Only a surprise—quite natural ! I thought I did not know the Count de Saxe, and I know him well, very well.

AB. By sight ?

AD. Oh, no, I have already spoken to him.

PRINCE. Where ?

MAU. At the ball at the Opera.

PRINCE. In disguise ?

AD. Yes. The Count de Saxe seems to like disguises.

MAU. Perhaps there were reasons, and if I were to ask you to judge for yourself, mademoiselle—

AB. That comes quite *apropos*, for Mademoiselle Lecouvreur has a favour to ask of you.

MAU. Of me ?

PRINCE. Yes. She only consented to come with us to intercede with you for a young lieutenant, a friend of hers.

AB. For whom she wanted to obtain a captaincy.

MAU. Indeed, mademoiselle, you ?

AD. I did ; but now I dare not.

MAU. And why ?

AD. I thought him only a poor officer, with no fortune but his sword ; but now, I fear, he does not require my assistance.

MAU. Whoever he may be, your protection must always be a source of happiness to him.

AD. We shall see. I'll inquire, and if he is really worthy—

PRINCE. You will have plenty of time to speak about that at supper ; you shall sit side by side. And now, Abbé, I think it is time to see if everything is ready.

AB. Yes, I will look after the fruits and flowers. I am the presiding genius on this occasion. (*Exit*)

PRINCE. I have something still more important to look after. I must see that no one leaves this house before supper.

AD. Oh, I am not going away, I promise.

PRINCE. But I will make sure. I will, myself, see all the doors locked, and give the password, so that no one may be able to leave before daybreak. (*Exit*)

MAU. (*aside*) By Jove ! what will become of the Princess !

AD. You the Count de Saxe ? I can scarcely believe it. Speak, that I may be sure that I am not dreaming.

MAU. My Adrienne !

AD. Maurice ! My idol ! My hero ! My heart spoke truly, you are great !

MAU. Hush ! The mystery which has hitherto shrouded our love is more than ever necessary now.

AD. Do not fear ; the flame of my love is far too fierce to.

be fanned by the breath of pride. Were they not speaking of some new enterprise, of some fresh campaign against Russia—of the conquest of the Duchy of Courland, which you were about to undertake unaided? I can well understand that when such vast interests are at stake, the love of a poor girl like myself must stand sorely in your way.

MAU. No, no! Never!

AD. I will be silent. My joy and my pride shall lie buried in my heart. In secret only will I feast on your love and your glory. If I will show my adoration for the great soldier of the age, it will be in common with the crowd. They may celebrate your exploits, but I shall hear them from your own lips. They will grant you titles, wealth—but you will allow me to assuage your grief. You will speak to me of the enemies born of your success, of the sting of jealousy and envy that persecute the hero of the battle field quite as much as the artist. You will confide in me and I will console you, inspire you. My voice shall say: "Courage! March on to the great goal which you have in view! As France's glory spreads its halo over you, so will the record of your deeds be glorious to her. To her devote your genius, your strong right arm. I ask nothing but your love."

MAU. My good angel! Thus be ever with me!

AD. Yes, ever! Always! See even to-night, distressed by your absence, I was thinking of you. I thought I might intercede for you with the Count de Saxe. Yes, emboldened by my love for you, I came here intent to use all my arts to win his favour. That was my intention, it is so still. Shall I succeed?

MAU. Bright fairy, who could resist you? And so you were going to dazzle this Count de Saxe with all your witchery.

AD. Ah, you see how lucky you are, even when the fates seem to conspire against you. You and the Count de Saxe alone occupied my thoughts. But hush! some one comes.

Enter ABBE carrying a basket of flowers, and MICHONNET, L.

AB. (placing basket on table, and making bouquets while speaking to MICHONNET) I am very sorry for you, my dear Michonnet, but the orders are final. No one who has entered here leaves before daybreak.

MICH. I thought that your good offices would be sufficient to enable me to get away, if only for a moment.

AB. Oh, I cannot help you. My concern lies with flowers, bouquets, and supper. But the Prince is the governor. He himself locked all the gates of the fortress, and he has the keys in his pocket.

AD. But, Michonnet, what is it?

MICH. Most important! About to-morrow's performance.

AD. Poor fellow ! He thinks of that only by day, and dreams of it at night.

MICH. One of the artists has been suddenly taken ill, and I wanted to see Mademoiselle Duclos—

AB. What ?

MICH. To ask her if she could play Cleopatra to-morrow.

AB. Is that all ? (*still arranging bouquets*)

MAU. (*aside*) Now for it !

AB. If that is the case, you need not trouble yourself, my good friend ! Mademoiselle Duclos will sup with us to-night.

MICH. All right ! Then I'll stay.

AB. Yes, she is the heroine of the evening ; ask the Count de Saxe.

AD. (*to MAURICE*) This is M. Michonnet, our prompter, and my best friend.

MICH. I believe I had the pleasure of seeing his Excellency this evening in the green-room. (*to ADRIENNE*) And I think he asked after you.

AD. That does not matter now. What about Cleopatra and Mademoiselle Duclos ?

MICH. True, but since you assure me that she is here.

AB. (*leaving the table and coming between ADRIENNE and MICHONNET, and running a ribbon round a bouquet*) This is her house. She made an appointment here with the Count Saxe.

AD. What do you say ?

AB. Oh, it was to be strictly private : quite tête-à-tête. I know all about it ; but I am guilty of indiscretion in saying a word about it before supper. Never mind. We are here among friends, so I think I may tell the story.

MAU. I shall not allow it, sir.

AB. The Count is right ! he knows the details much better than I ; let him relate it.

MAU. Sir !

AB. I should spoil it altogether, I'm afraid ; whilst the hero of the adventure—(*to ADRIENNE*) Might I offer this bouquet to Melpomene ? Oh, good gracious ! what a tragic expression ! See, for yourself, Count.

MICH. Adrienne, what is the matter ?

AD. I ? nothing, nothing ! I am quite well, you see ! I am only sorry to have interrupted the adventure the account of which we were about to hear.

AB. And it was an adventure. Just as we were entering the room, Mademoiselle Duclos left it. We saw her run out by that door (*pointing*) and she is there still.

MICH. Here ?

AB. Yes, go and look !

AD. I will.

MAU. Stay ! One word .

MICH. I'll go and see. I must know if she'll play Cleopatra.
(Exit, D.)

MAU. A political negotiation, of which neither the Prince nor the Abbé must have the slightest knowledge, brought me here to-night. My whole future depends upon it.

AD. And Mademoiselle Duclos ?

MAU. She is not here ; and I do not love the person who is in that room. I swear it upon my honour. Do you believe me ?

AD. I do.

MAU. Thanks. But you must do even more than that for me. You must prevent the Abbé from entering that room, and from seeing the person who is there, whilst I will endeavour to get her out of this house unperceived.

AD. Go. I will watch here.

MAU. Thanks, Adrienne, thanks ! (Exit, c.)

AD. Upon his honour ! Oh, no ! I cannot disbelieve him.

Enter MICHONNET.

MICH. Adrienne ! Adrienne ! What an adventure !

AD. What is it ?

MICH. It is not Duclos.

AD. He said so.

MICH. It is really not Duclos.

AB. What ! Not Duclos ? Who is it then ?

MICH. Hush ! It is a secret !

AB. Well, there are only three of us and I don't count. Not Duclos, and the Count de Saxe confessed it was she ! Who is it then ?

MICH. I don't know. I know only that it is not she. That I swear.

AB. Have you seen her ?

MICH. Not at all.

AD. Good !

MICH. It was quite dark, still I thought I saw by the window the lace wrapper of a lady. I said simply, "Business ! I am Michonnet. Will you play Cleopatra to-morrow ?" An unknown voice replied, "For whom do you take me ?" "For Mademoiselle Duclos, of course," I said. "I am not Duclos," continued the voice, "I am here on a matter that must remain strictly secret, but whoever you may be, if you can find me the means to escape from this house unseen, you may count upon my protection and your fortune is made." I replied that I was not ambitious, but if she could only procure my nomination as a sociétaire of the Comédie Française——

AD. Well?

MICH. I would do what I could for her. I shall be a sociétaire at last. Now what can be done?

AB. First of all we must know who she is.

AD. Surely you don't think of that.

AB. But she came here with the Count de Saxe; of that I am sure.

AD. So much the more reason to respect her.

AB. But you don't know—you cannot know what interest I have to know the name of this person.

AD. (*aside*) Maurice spoke the truth.

AB. (*aside*) The Princess relies upon me, and I must know it at any price.

AD. Monsieur, you will not enter here.

AB. But just a glimpse!

AD. No. I will appeal to the Prince himself, who will not permit in his house—

AB. You are right. I will fly to the Prince. He will be delighted. What luck for him! Duclos innocent after all—completely innocent. He did not expect it; neither did I. (*Exit*)

AD. He's gone!

MICH. What are you going to do?

AD. Set free that person, whoever she may be, and save her.

MICH. But why?

AD. I promised, and I will it so.

MICH. Enough! May I at least assist you—be of some use?

AD. No! not a soul must see her. (*blows out the candles*) Not even I.

MICH. But how are you going to manage in the dark?

AD. Fear nothing. Watch outside that nobody may surprise us.

MICH. It is a peculiar business; but I am going—I am going. (*Exit. ADRIENNE searches for door and knocks*)

AD. No answer. Open, madame, in the name of Maurice de Saxe. (*door opens*) Ah, I knew the "Open sesame" for this enchanted cave.

PRIN. (*opening door*) What do you want with me?

AD. To save you, to afford you the means of leaving this place.

PRIN. All the doors are locked.

AD. I have the key of the garden gate.

PRIN. How fortunate! Give it! Give it!

AD. Unfortunately that is not enough. You will have to descend unseen; but how? I do not know. I am unacquainted with the house.

PRIN. Be re-assured ! There is a secret door panel somewhere about here. (*searches*) Ah, here it is ! But you to whom I owe so much, who are you ?

AD. No matter ! Go !

PRIN. I cannot distinguish your features.

AD. Nor I yours.

PRIN. I know your voice ; I have heard it more than once. Yes, yes, why spurn my gratitude ! It is you, Duchess de Mirepoix.

AD. No, no ! But delay not a moment to escape the danger which threatens you.

PRIN. You know it then ?

AD. Never mind. Trust to my discretion and fear nothing.

PRIN. But the danger ? The secret ? Who confided it to you ?

AD. One who tells me everything.

PRIN. (*aside*) Heavens ! (*aloud*) Who gave Maurice the right to tell you everything ?

AD. And who gave you the right to call him Maurice, and by what right do you question me ? Why, your hand is trembling. You love him.

PRIN. With all the passion of my soul.

AD. And so do I.

PRIN. Ah ! You are the one I seek.

AD. And who are you ?

PRIN. Greater than you ; that is certain.

AD. Who will prove that ?

PRIN. I will ruin you.

AD. And I—I protect you.

PRIN. This is too much ! I must see your face.

AD. Then I shall have to tear the mask from yours.

PRINCE. (*outside*) Egad ! Now we shall learn the truth.

PRIN. (*aside*) My husband's voice, and to have to leave when my rival is in my power, when I am about to see her.

AD. Stay ! Do stay ; They are bringing lights.

PRIN. Yes, I will stay. Oh, no, no. I dare not.

(*rushes through secret door and closes it*)

Enter PRINCE and ABBE, and LADIES, and two SERVANTS with lights.

AD. (*to PRINCE*) Come in. (*looks round*) She has gone. Vanished ! How I hate her !

PRINCE. (*to ABBE*) You are positive that it is not Duclos ?

AB. I swear it !

PRINCE. Well, I believe you. But I must judge for myself. Come with me.

AD. (*aside*) "On my honour," he said. Upon his honour ! I cannot believe yet that he has deceived me.

Enter MICHONNET on tiptoe.

MICH. Well, that lady ? You have saved her then.

AD. Yes.

MICH. She crossed the garden just now with the Count de Saxe.

AD. Are you sure ?

MICH. Of course I am. In her hurry she dropped this bracelet.

AD. Give it to me. And the Count de Saxe ?

MICH. He left with her.

AD. With her ?

MICH. Yes ; don't you trouble yourself about her, they seemed very happy together.

AD. All hope is lost. Upon his honour, he said. Upon his honour !
(*staggers and falls on chair*)

ACT DROP.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*An elegantly furnished saloon in the Hotel of the PRINCE. Doors. PRINCESS discovered. SERVANT discovered.*

PRIN. You have not been able to discover any trace of my bracelet ?

SER. No, your Highness.

PRIN. Have you seen the coachman ?

SER. He knows nothing of it.

PRIN. You know I place implicit confidence in you. That bracelet must be found at any price.

SER. It shall be found.

(*SERVANT goes up to table and is about to take casket from it*)

PRIN. What have you there ?

SER. The casket which his Highness brought yesterday.

PRIN. Oh, that horrible thing ! take it out of my sight ! Stay, who is with the Prince now ?

SER. A messenger from Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

PRIN. From Mademoiselle Lecouvreur ? (*aside*) And not to me ! M. de Bouillon, you are fickle ; Duclos yesterday, Lecouvreur to-day. (*to SERVANT*) Do you know the messenger ?

SER. Yes, it is M. Michonnet, the prompter of the Comédie Française.

PRIN. (*aside*) The man who came into the room where I was hidden in that dreadful house. When I think that she was in my power, and that she escaped me unknown, unrecognised ! But I will know her. Her voice seems still to be ringing in my ears. I know every intonation and yet cannot place it. But when I have found her—— (*to SERVANT*) What are you waiting for ?

SER. For your orders, your Highness.

PRIN. Why are you holding that casket ? Put it down.

SER. Your Highness just ordered me to take it away.

PRIN. Stop ! (*goes slowly up to SERVANT and takes the casket from his hand*) Give it to me ; I will see to it myself.

(SERVANT bows and exits)

(PRINCESS takes up casket and makes a movement to open it, but shuts it again quickly. MICHONNET's voice outside)

MICH. Thanks, Prince, a thousand thanks ! Not another step further. It is too much honour.

PRIN. That man ! Ah, when I have found her.

(takes up casket and exits quickly)

Enter MICHONNET.

MICH. To think of it ! A Prince de Bouillon, a descendant of the Crusaders, conducting me to his door—me, a poor prompter ! What more could he have done if I were a sociétaire ? Well, I have executed my commission successfully, too. I can go back to rehearsal. (*looks at watch*) Goodness gracious, they will be all gone, and I was not there. It is the first time I have missed a call since I've been in the theatre. It's too terrible to contemplate ; but then Adrienne asked me to come here, and she seemed so impatient for the answer.

Enter SERVANT and ADRIENNE.

SER. Yes, mademoiselle, he is here still. (*Exit*)

MICH. (R.) Dear me, she has come for the answer herself.

AD. I have been waiting for you an age. Where have you been these two hours ? I was afraid you had met with an acci lent, that some obstacle had intervened.

MICH. Obstacle ! None whatever. Every door opened at the mention of your name. I was shewn to the Prince at once. I didn't make a long story of it. I said simply, "Your Highness has often told Mademoiselle Lecouvreur that you would give her sixty thousand livres for the diamonds presented to her by the Queen, and, your Highness, here are the diamonds. Please give me the money." That was short and sweet, wasn't it ?

AD. Well, and then ?

MICH. He didn't give me the money at once. He wanted to know what it was for. I told him I didn't know, and as you hadn't told me that was perfectly true. He hum'd and ha'd, and then sat down and wrote on this scrap of paper an order upon the Treasury for sixty thousand livres. "Give this to Mademoiselle Lecouvreur," he said, "and tell her that I keep her diamonds merely as a deposit." I liked that; and then he added, "Whenever she likes to take the trouble to fetch them herself, she can have them back again." I didn't quite like that.

AD. Then you have the sixty thousand livres.

MICH. Yes, and also the ten thousand more that you wanted. I fetched them first. That's what kept me so long. You are not angry with me now, are you?

AD. And where did you get them?

MICH. From my uncle's notary.

AD. It is your inheritance. All you have in the world. Good, kind Michonnet, I dare not take it. I may risk my fortune but not yours.

MICH. But why risk? Explain.

AD. I cannot!

MICH. Then don't, I shan't ask you. Take it, that's all I want.

AD. Well! (*aside*) I shall be able to restore it to him after all. (*to MICHONNET*) Take all this money at once to the Russian Ambassador—

MICH. The Russian Ambassador?

AD. Yes, and get from him, with a receipt for the interest, a promissory note drawn by the Count de Kalkreutz and accepted by the Count de Saxe.

MICH. I don't understand.

AD. Well, there is no reason why you should. (*enter ABBE, c.*) Hush! hush!—that busybody the Abbé.

AB. (*c.*) How! Mademoiselle Lecouvreur, here already. I hope that you are not going to say that we are to be deprived of your charming performance this evening.

AD. No, no! I have promised to contribute my humble efforts to the amusement of the Prince's guests and I shall keep my word.

AB. I breathe again. One of our admirers will be absent from the party—the poor Count de Saxe.

AD. How?

AB. It is not very romantic, but vastly amusing. Our young hero, you know, was about to set out this very week for Courland, to conquer it, to become a Grand Duke or King or Emperor, or something equally exalted; when lo! an enemy comes who proves even too much for the sword of Saxe.

AD. And he is?

AB. The holder of a bill for the trifling amount of sixty thousand livres.

MICH. (*aside*) The very sum.

AB. The Russian Ambassador, to keep our warrior out of mischief, bought the bill, they say, of one Count Kalkreutz.

MICH. A Swede?

AB. You know him then, eh? (*signal of caution from ADRIENNE*) But the best of the joke is that the scheme of buying the bill was suggested to the Ambassador by a great *ady.*

AD. A great lady?

AB. Unfortunately I do not know—but I hope to know her. She was actuated, it seems, by a fit of jealousy. But I must tell my story to the Prince, who is equally at home in matters of chemistry and scandal. (*Exit*)

MICH. You love him then?

AD. Yes.

MICH. And are going to deliver him?

AD. Yes.

MICH. With your fortune?

AD. With my heart's blood, if necessary.

MICH. And this when you know he loves another?

AD. I know it.

MICH. You say this so calmly?

AD. Ah, you cannot understand that one can love in spite of one's-self.

MICH. No.

AD. That one can love seeking to hide that love from one's-self, blushing with shame at the thought of it—shame that still springs from purest love.

MICH. Ah, but I do understand you, Adrienne. I do. And what do you hope to do?

AD. To save him. To drag him from the prison into which he has been thrown through the dastardly spite, the ignoble jealousy of that great lady.

MICH. Your rival? Perhaps the one who lost the bracelet. Her whom he prefers to you! Her for whom he left you last night!

AD. Don't speak like that! Your words strike me like cold steel, and surely that is not your intention.

MICH. No, no, it is not.

AD. That rival! I must know her. I want to go to her and tell her, "He was thrown into prison through you! I gave him liberty; liberty to see you—to love you, perhaps—to betray me, if he chooses. Now tell me, madam, which of us loves more?"

MICH. But why all this for one so ungrateful?

AD. Why? You ask why? Am I not allowed to be revenged, and to be revenged in my own way? Did you not

hear that the moment of action had arrived, that his troops were waiting for him, that the time had come for him to win a duchy, perhaps to place a crown upon his brow? And then think of it, friend, think of it, that he will owe it all to me! King through the love of her whom he abandoned and betrayed! King through the devotion of the poor actress! Ah, let him do what he may he could never forget that. He may stifle his love; his glory and his power will ever speak to him of me. Now do you understand my vengeance? "The load of all my gifts shall weigh his conscience down!" Ah, my great Corneille! Come to my aid! Give me courage! Fill my heart with generous impulses, with sublime sentiments, such as thou hast so often placed upon my lips. Enable me to prove to them all that we, the interpreters of thy genius, must by inspiration of thy thought gain some of thy nobility. I will do as thou hast taught me. (*to MICHONNET*) Run! Lose not a moment! Deliver him! I will wait for you at home! (*Exit*)

MICH. Michonnet, Michonnet! There is something very wrong with your economy. She gives her fortune for her lover, you are giving yours for a rival. That's slightly different, and I am afraid I'll never find any authority in Corneille for it. I am wild with the fellow that he does not love her, and I should be absolutely furious if he did. Ah, there is a lady coming this way. How handsome she is. The Princess without doubt. I can get away without her seeing me. Let us be off to appease hungry Russia. (*Exit*)

Enter PRINCESS.

PRIN. Let Maurice join her now if he can. He will find that the garlands of flowers by which I hold my admirers, have become fetters of steel not so easily broken. The stipulations of our Platonic treaty were not to bind a man's heart for ever! We will see Count, if you can be free to choose your loves. And I should have learned the secret but for my husband! (*enter ABBE*) Ah! there is that stupid Abbé, who promised to unravel the mystery, and never knows anything.

AB. Ah, madam, so much grace and splendour! I am dazzled.

PRIN. It was my desire to be ready in good time for the reception, and while I was waiting, I was dreaming.

AB. Not of me? Not of me?

PRIN. Perhaps! Who knows? My thoughts were intent on one object and you know I have not forbidden you to assist me; on the contrary.

AB. Well, madam, I am furious, I have found nothing out yet.

PRIN. Indeed, you reassure me. I counted so much on

your talents and your skill that I was already frightened at the promised reward, but thank fate and you—

AB. Ah, do not speak thus ; you plunge me in despair.

PRIN. Abbé, I am afraid you will never succeed ; you are always too late.

AB. I did all I could. I felt sure I recognised her, and everything seemed to prove that it was Duclos. Your husband himself seemed to be convinced of it.

PRIN. So much more reason not to believe it. I myself have been either luckier or cleverer than you. By a singular accident, one night last week, I met this mysterious beauty.

AB. (L.C.) You know her ? Then why send me to discover her ?

PRIN. It was very dark, and I could not distinguish her features. I only recollect her voice ; she spoke but very few words, but the sound was perfectly known to me. I must have heard it hundreds of times, and still I cannot think who she is.

AB. Strange !

PRIN. I have tried all I know. I have called upon all my acquaintances. I, first of all, thought it was Madame de Mirepoix. I went to her—bah ! a little squeaky voice like a soprano out of tune. Then I called upon Madame Sancerre, and Madame Beauveau. You have no idea how anxious I was about their health, or all the questions I asked in search of those accents which haunted me and still seemed as unattainable as a will-o'-the-wisp. I listened to all their tales and their idle prattle with an heroic courage all spent in vain. Not a syllable that reminded me of that voice, but still I know that I have heard it often and among my intimate acquaintances.

AB. Stav. Did you try the Duchess d'Aumont ?

PRIN. No. Why ?

AB. An inspiration—an idea.

PRIN. What ? You, Abbé ? It would be strange. You may be right after all. She seemed so interested yesterday in the Count de Saxe. Perhaps she had all the news from him, not from Florestan de Bellisle.

AB. Her cousin !

PRIN. Do you believe in cousins ?

AB. Ah, they are very convenient. (*crosses, R.C.*)

Enter SERVANT, R. C. (announcing)

SER. Her Grace the Duchess d'Aumont. (*Exit*)

PRIN. (L. C., *aside to ABBÉ*) Fate sends her to us. (*to DUCHESS*) How kind of you, my dear, to come so early. The Abbé and myself were just speaking of you.

DUCH. (C.) Really !

AB. (R.C.) Of your admiration of Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

DUCH. Yes. She is a genius.

PRIN. And the enthusiasm with which you speak of M. de Saxe.

DUCH. Yes, he is a great man. That reminds me. I am always to be your newsbearer. He has been arrested this morning.

AB. Arrested?

DUCH. Yes, for debt. Poor fellow! to think that he who defied an army has fallen a victim to a bailiff.

Enter PRINCE, L. D., MARQUISE, COUNTESS, and other LADIES and GENTLEMEN.

AB. (R. C., *aside to PRINCESS*) Did you recognise the voice?

PRIN. (*aside to ABBE*) No, not a bit like it. Search! Try all you know, and perhaps——

(*goes to receive LADIES*)

PRINCE. Ladies, what I tell you is perfectly true. The Count de Saxe is at this moment free.

PRIN. Free! Good Heavens!

MAR. What? You know it also? How disagreeable! I thought I was the only person that was aware of it.

COUNTESS. There was a rumour this morning that the sovereign of Courland had been arrested for a considerable sum of money. Is it not true then?

MAR. Oh, dear, yes.

DUCH. Then how does he come to be free?

MAR. Why, it is quite a romance.

COUNTESS. Not at all. The most coldly formal affair possible. Somebody has paid his debts.

MAR. And don't you see in that something extraordinarily romantic?

PRIN. But tell me who paid his debts?

MAR. Ah, you must ask the Prince. I do not know.

PRINCE. And I, ladies——

PRIN. Well?

PRINCE. And I do not know either. All that I do know is, that he is free. He was only liberated a moment ago, and he has sent a challenge to M. de Kalkreutz. I have just seen the bearer of the challenge, and that is how I know all about it.

PRIN. A duel! How very awkward. He was to have been here this evening.

DUCH. Ah, fear nothing. He will come.

PRIN. Do you think so, madame?

Enter SERVANT announcing.

SER. Mademoiselle Lecouvreur and M. Michonnet, of the Comédie Française.

(*Exit*)

Enter ADRIENNE and MICHONNET.

PRINCE. (*receiving ADRIENNE*) How shall I thank you, mademoiselle, for the favour you confer upon Madame de Bouillon and myself?

DUCH. (*R., to PRINCESS*) Do introduce me to Mademoiselle Lecouvreur. It is so very long that I have admired her from a distance. I shall be so happy to tell her so personally.

PRIN. (*introducing*) The Duchess d'Aumont, Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

AD. In truth, ladies, I feel quite confused by so much honour.

MICH. (*aside*) She looks as great a lady as the best of them.

AD. You and the other ladies who have deigned to receive me——

PRIN. (*aside*) Heavens! that voice!

AD. Afford the humble artist the opportunity of studying that exquisite style, that elegance of carriage which you alone possess.

PRIN. (*aside*) What do I hear? I am sure I have heard that voice. No, it is not possible, it is a dream. What an idea! An actress my rival! And why not? (*looks at ADRIENNE, who is surrounded by all the NOBLEMEN*) Are they not all at her feet at this moment? Why should he differ from them? This state of doubt is insupportable. I must confirm it or refute it at any price. (*turns to LADIES and GENTLEMEN*) Well, shall we begin?

PRIN. We must wait a little bit longer for the Count de Saxe. You know he promised to come.

PRIN. (*R. c., looking at ADRIENNE*) I am afraid he will not. (*aside*) She is listening.

PRINCE. What makes you think so? You know he is free. Free through the power of love.

PRIN. She is trembling still. Did she deliver him? (*aloud*) I did not want to banish your hopes, nor spread a gloom, but do you not know that he has fought a duel?

AD. A duel?

PRIN. (*aside*) She is approaching. (*aloud*) And the Abbé, who knows everything, says that the Count has been dangerously wounded.

AB. I said so?

PRIN. (*aside*) Silence! (*crosses to ADRIENNE, who faints in a chair*) Mademoiselle Lecouvreur is fainting. (*aside*) It must be she.

MICH. (*to ADRIENNE*) Adrienne!

AD. (*recovering*) Oh, it is nothing. The light—the heat. (*to PRINCESS*) Thanks, madame, you are too kind. (*aside*) What a look!

Enter SERVANT.

SER. The Count de Saxe.

(Exit)

AD. Ah!

MICH. *(aside to ADRIENNE)* Take care! Take care! Joy betrays more even than grief.

Enter MAURICE.

PRINCE. *(to MAURICE)* Welcome, Count. You are not wounded then, as the Abbé was saying just now?

AB. Wounded? Why I never—

MAU. Bah! Charles XII. was the last Swede who knew anything about fighting.

PRINCE. And the Count de Kalkreutz?

MAU. Disarmed at the second pass! He was not worth killing. *(aside to PRINCESS)* You were right, Princess, in saying that you would make me return. The service which you have rendered me—

AD. He is whispering to her. Can she be the lady I met last night?

PRIN. *(to MAURICE)* I do not understand you.

MAU. I must speak to you.

PRIN. This evening, then, when they are all gone.

MAU. *(seeing ADRIENNE)* Well, Mademoiselle Lecouvreur.

PRINCE. *(to MAURICE)* By-the-bye, Count, I wish to ask you something about Sweden.

AB. *(R.. aside to PRINCESS)* But, my dear Princess, why did you say a little while ago that I had said—

PRIN. Why? *(aloud)* Because you never know anything. Imagine, ladies, this poor Abbé, who thinks that he is one of the cleverest men in the world, has been racing about Paris for the last two days to discover a secret. What do you think it is? The name of the unknown beauty for whom the Count de Saxe has given up the daughter of the Empress of Russia. But while I think of it, perhaps Mademoiselle Lecouvreur can throw a light upon this mystery.

AD. *(up, L.C.)* I, madam?

PRIN. Doubtless; for all the world is saying that it is a lady who belongs to the theatre.

AD. Strange! At the theatre the report is current that she is a lady of title.

PRIN. I have even heard something about a meeting at night.

AD. And I about a visit to a villa.

DUCH. This is very delightful. What pretty scandal!

PRIN. I was told that the actress had been surprised by a jealous rival.

AD. You astonish me. I have been told that the great lady had been obliged to leave the house through the arrival of an obtrusive husband.

DUCH. Why you seem to know all about it, you two.

AB. They know a great deal more about it than I do.

DUCH. And I should like to decide which of you is right. Have you any proofs?

PRIN. I have! Mine is a bouquet of roses, tied with a golden cord, presented by the pretty one to her adorer.

AD. (*aside*) My bouquet!

DUCH. This is splendid! And have you proof also, mademoiselle?

AD. Indeed I have. The lady, while escaping through the garden, dropped—

DUCH. Like Cinderella, her glass slipper.

AD. No, a bracelet of diamonds.

AB. Why this is quite a fairy tale.

AD. It is reality. This bracelet was found by my friend, and here it is.

PRIN. (*aside*) My bracelet!

AB. (*taking and shewing it*) Splendid! Look at it, ladies.

Enter PRINCE and MAURICE.

PRIN. (*calmly*) Oh, yes, it is superb.

PRINCE. What are you looking at?

AB. This bracelet.

PRINCE. It is my wife's!

ALL. His wife's!

PRIN. Yes. (*going up and shewing it*) It is very handsome, is it not?

AD. (*aside*) It is she!

PRIN. (*to PRINCE*) When you have quite done with my bracelet, Prince. (*puts it on*) Well, now that the Count de Saxe is here, perhaps Mademoiselle Lecouvreur will be good enough to recite.

AD. (*aside*) I recite at this moment!

MICH. Be calm, my child. Be careful. There are better actresses than you in this room.

MAU. Mademoiselle, will you be kind enough?

AD. Yes, M. le Comte.

PRIN. How delightful. Pray be seated, ladies. (*they sit; to MAURICE*) There is room here, Count, by my side. (*he crosses to couch*)

AD. (*aside*) To see them there together, before my eyes, as if defying me! Oh, Heaven, give me strength to contain myself.

PRINCE. Well, what will you let us hear?

DUCH. Pauline's dream.

COUNTESS. Or Hermione.

PRIN. Or the soliloquy of the deserted Ariadne.

AD. (*hardly able to contain herself*) This is too much.

DUCH. Why not Phèdre, which you played so well the evening before last?

AD. Phèdre! Let it be so. (*recites*)

"Oh, justice of high Heaven! What have I this day done?
My husband will be here, and with him comes his son,
For whom my heart is burning with unholy fire,
He'll watch the face with which I dare to meet his sire,
He'll count the bitter tears that overflow mine eyes,
He'll seem to hear my soul's impassioned, stifled cries.
Will he betray my secret? Ah! his silence will be vain—
I scorn to wear a mask; I know not how to feign,
For I am not as those, who know to hide disgrace,
Behind their husband's honoured name, with brazen face,
Who think in all their hidden infamy no blame—
Unblushing wantons, who know not what is shame*."

ALL. Admirable! bravo, Adrienne!

MICH. Unhappy child! What have you done?

AD. I have taken my revenge.

PRIN. (*aside*) Such an insult! She shall pay dearly for this.

AD. (*to PRINCE*) I am very fatigued—ill in fact—perhaps you will allow me to retire. (*MAURICE is about to go, he is stopped by PRINCESS*)

PRIN. Stay here! (*to ADRIENNE*) Although we should be delighted to keep you here, we dare not insist. Mademoiselle Lecouvreur's carriage.

AD. (*to MAURICE*) Follow me.

MAU. (*aside*) Impossible, this evening—you shall know why—

AD. Enough!

(*Exit, L.*)

ACT DROP.

* NOTE.—Madame Modjeska does not speak Mr. Herman's, but the following version of the recitation:—

"Oh, justice of outraged Heaven! what have I done!
My husband comes, and with him comes his son,
For whom my heart burns with accursed fire.
He'll watch the face with which I meet his sire,
He'll count the tears that overflow mine eyes!
He'll hear my soul's impassioned stifled cries.
Will he betray my secret? Oh, his silence will be vain.
Oh, horror, horror!
I am not a woman, who could hide her shame
Behind the honour of a husband's name;
A wanton who can sin and show no trace
On brazen brow, or on unblushing face."

ACT V.

SCENE.—ADRIENNE's apartment, handsomely furnished. *Sofa, L.; doors in flat, C., and R.U.E., and L.U.E. Fire-place with fire, R. Enter MICHONNET and SUSANNE, L.C.*

MICH. Yes, yes, I know that she has shut her door, and I know that she is tired to death with the excitement at the Prince de Bouillon's this evening, but I am sure that she will see me. Tell her I am here, I, Michonnet.

Enter ADRIENNE from R. door.

AD. Ah, I was expecting you, old friend.

MICH. (to SERVANT) There, there, I told you how it would be. *(Exit SUSANNE, C.)*

AD. I have been so ill—so very ill. I suffer so!

MICH. I expected as much, and I knew that I could not sleep without asking you how you were. I went to the theatre after I had brought you home.

AD. Indeed? Is the play over?

MICH. No; it will last fully an hour yet.

AD. I am glad of that as I wish to give notice that I cannot possibly act to-morrow.

MICH. I'll take care of that; and I will bring you word when everything is settled. Ah! I am very uneasy about you, not on account of that indisposition only—that will soon pass away; but on account of something far more serious.

AD. I give you so much trouble! What do you mean? You said "something serious."

MICH. The scene of this evening. Do you suppose that, with the exception of the Prince, anybody misunderstood the allusions to the Princess? She understood them, I'll be sworn.

AD. I hope she did. I feel she did. I have stabbed her to the heart's core, have I not? I have been very ill, but that thought comes to me as a balm of consolation. With every word in those last two lines, I felt I struck home. Yes, Michonnet, you noticed the terror on every face; she bore herself bravely, her features did not quiver, but I could see a deadly paleness overspread that immovable countenance, on which I have stamped an indelible brand.

MICH. That is precisely what alarms me; the blow was too hard, too palpable. These great ladies with their flowery wreaths and their gems and their suavity,—vengeance is dear to them, and whatever their malice suggests they perform, even to ridding themselves of a rival.

AD. I do not care. What can she inflict upon me to equal the torture of knowing that she is beloved by him? The

wound I dealt her has ere this been healed with a fond look. Her tears—if she shed any—he will kiss away, and now at this very moment, while my heart is breaking, she is happy, for she is near him. Michonnet, as I left the room I whispered to him to follow me, but she commanded him to remain.

MICH. Well?

AD. He remained with her. Oh, it is too hard to bear. I will separate them, rush between them and upbraid him.

MICH. Nonsense! This is frenzy.

AD. Would it not be better to die in satisfying revenge, than to expire here, torn by jealousy and despair? For die I shall—I feel it, Michonnet. (*sinks in arm-chair, R.*)

MICH. (*L.*) No, no, you will not die. Disappointed love is a torment, an unspeakable torture, but it does not kill. The last years of my life can bear witness to that.

AD. Michonnet?

MICH. Yes, yes, you did not believe that beneath so rugged an exterior there was a heart that could be racked like yours. But no matter, I am speaking of something that happened a long time ago; time enures us to everything—even to being unhappy.

AD. I will follow your example, Michonnet. I will imitate that fortitude which does you so much honour; and in the end I will—I am determined—conquer this unfortunate passion.

MICH. (*joyfully*) You will?

AD. Yes, you shall hear me mention Maurice's name without the slightest emotion.

Enter SUSANNE with a small casket.

SUS. A casket for Mademoiselle.

AD. Who sent it?

SUS. The servant who brought it said it comes from the Count de Saxe.

AD. From him, from him! (*takes it and puts it on table, and seats herself R. of table. Exit SUSANNE*) What can it mean? My hand trembles; I dread to open it.

MICH. And she fancies that she has ceased to love.

(*goes to back of table*)

AD. Let me see, let me see. (*opens it*) Ah!

MICH. What is it?

AD. Look, look, Michonnet, it is my bouquet! I held it in my hand when he called upon me yesterday morning, after that long absence. He asked me for it. I gave it as a slight token of love. And now, look, Michonnet. He might have cast it aside, trampled it under foot, but to send it back thus. Ah, it is too cruel!

MICH. It is not his act. It is not. I am sure he has been compelled to do this by the order of your rival.

AD. Compelled! Oh, she commanded, did she? And was he forced to obey? Is he a slave that he was forced to insult one whom once—once he loved? Poor flowers, that have withered so soon! You have still outlived his promises. He covered you with kisses, but there is no trace of them on your leaves now—no trace of aught but neglect and insult. The last kiss you receive shall be one of eternal farewell. *(kisses them)* It seems like a kiss of death! And thus ends all memory of him and of my love! *(throws them into fire, and falls)*

MICH. *(raising her)* Adrienne! Adrienne!

AD. Do not be alarmed, it is gone. I am better now. I am better now. *(MAURICE outside)*

MAU. Where is Adrienne?

Enter MAURICE, c.

MAU. Adrienne! My own Adrienne!

AD. Maurice! *(rushes into his arms, but suddenly draws back)* No, no, leave me, I forget myself!

(MICHONNET seats himself on sofa)

MAU. Leave you, Adrienne, leave you? I come to implore your pardon. When you whispered to me to follow you, I was restrained by duty—by honour. I supposed I had received an important benefit from the Princess. I felt that I could not suffer another day to pass without telling her that I could not accept her gifts—that I did not love her—that my heart belonged to you, to you only, sweet Adrienne. Judge of my astonishment during the interview that followed your performance. After I had uttered the words "I know all," she turned pale and trembled, and falling at my feet, declared that love alone had prompted her, that it was she who caused me to be arrested. My sole object was to thank her for my deliverance, and I learned from her own lips that she had been the cause of my imprisonment.

AD. Heavens!

MAU. I had felt myself bound by every tie of gratitude to a woman I could not love; and now—now—I am free—free to fly to you, my Adrienne—my true—my only love! Behold me. *(falls on his knees)* You will not repel me now?

AD. Can I really believe you?

MAU. Upon my honour, I speak the truth. I am surrounded by mystery, for I am still ignorant who freed me from prison. Can you enlighten me?

AD. No, no.

MICH. *(comes down, c.)* Then I can! It is herself.

AD. Silence, silence.

MICH. For you she pledged her fortune, her diamonds—all she possessed, and more.

AD. No, no.

MICH. It is true. She borrowed—and, believe me, I speak the truth. My desire is to see her happy, for I love her—as a father should love his child.

AD. Why those tears?

MICH. They are tears of joy. But I must return to the theatre. Remember what I have spoken is true.

(Exit, c.)

MAU. Then, Adrienne, it was you?

AD. Yes, I and my best friend, he who has just quitted us. But no more of that. You accept.

MAU. On one condition, that you in turn accept my offer. I know not whether I shall gain or lose the crown of Courland, but if I conquer, you shall be my wife.

AD. I your wife—I?

MAU. Yes, yes, my queen, my bride; but for you all my hopes would have been blighted. But you grow pale.

AD. It is nothing, nothing. So much happiness after such despair. It has proved too much for me.

MAU. (assisting her to chair L. of R. table, as she staggers) But your strength seems to fail you.

AD. A strange sensation has taken possession of me since I pressed that bouquet to my lips.

MAU. What bouquet?

AD. The one I took for a symbol of parting, but which was really the messenger of love.

MAU. What do you mean?

AD. The flowers which you returned me in this casket.

MAU. I sent you nothing. Where are these flowers?

AD. Burned. I thought you had rejected both me and my trifling gift, and that like myself it had to perish.

MAU. But, Adrienne, my beloved Adrienne, you are really ill. Your hand trembles.

AD. No, not now! I am well, the pain is not here! (touches heart) but there is a strange sensation here (touches head)—very strange; a thousand fantastic objects seem to pass before me without order or connection. What did you say? Ah, I had forgotten; my imagination seems to be wandering, I lose all power of control—and I must not lose it—no—for Maurice's sake. And—Ah, the play will soon begin, and they are anxious, no doubt, for they have been promised for such a long time the *Psyche* of Corneille—for a very long time—from the days when I first saw Maurice. There was an objection to its production; it is too old, it seems *passée*. But I said no, no, and I have a reason. Ah, they little guess that reason; Maurice has never said to me "I love you," and I have never said so to

him—the words spring from my heart to my lips—but I dare not utter them. Now in this play of *Psyche* there are certain passages that I can address to him before everybody and no one will find me out. It is a good thought, is it not?

MAU. (R.C.) My love, my best love, return to yourself.

AD. (C.) Hush, hush, I must appear on the stage. What a splendid audience—how numerous, how brilliant! how my movements are watched by every glance. They are kind, very kind to love me thus. But where is he? Oh, yonder in his box. Yes, yes, there is Maurice, he smiles upon me. My cue—

“His eyes, with loving glow, still fixed on mine,
Those glorious orbs, so filled with love divine;
So piercing, yet so tender, that my heart,
Though tortured, seems with half its grief to part—
Nay! do not turn them from me, though I feel
Each glance gives wounds, that naught but death can
heal.”

MAU. Adrienne! Adrienne! She does not see me, she does not hear me. Heavens! what can I do?

(rings bell)

Enter SUSANNE.

MAU. Quick! Seek help for your mistress. I dare not leave her. (exit SUSANNE, C.) My presence, perhaps, will calm her. Adrienne, my own Adrienne, hear me.

(puts his arm round her)

AD. (C.) Hush, hush, who is that? Someone one enters his box and sits near him. She hides her face, but I know her—no earthly obstacle could prevent me from knowing that face. Maurice is speaking to her. He does not look at me any more—no more.

MAU. (C.) Dearest, Maurice is near you.

AD. Ha, their eyes meet, their hands are pressed together, and she says something to him. I know the words though I cannot hear them; she bids him remain by her side, and he repels me. Ah, he does not know that I am dying.

(falls in his arms)

MAU. Adrienne, for pity's sake!

AD. Pity!

MAU. Has my voice lost its influence?

AD. What do you want?

MAU. Listen to me for a single moment, look at (R. C.) me, Maurice.

AD. Maurice? No, no, Maurice is near her, he forgets me—go—go!

“Swear as you swore to me, but fancy not
Your former vows are by the gods forgot!
Abandon me—the faithless heart bestow
Upon another—go, thou false lover, go!”

(suddenly recognises him)

Ah, Maurice!

(falls in his arms and slips to ground)

MAU. *(puts her gently on chair, c.)* Can no one aid her?
Has she not a friend?

Enter MICHONNET.

MAU. Yes, thank Heaven, here is one at last.

MICH. *(R., sinking on his knees)* What is this? Tell me!
Is Adrienne in danger?

MAU. *(L.)* Adrienne is dying!

MICH. No, no. See, she recovers.

AD. Oh agony! Who is near me? How I suffer! *(recovering)* Ah, Maurice; and you too, Michonnet. It is very, very kind. My head is calm now, but here in my bosom there is something, like burning coal, consuming me.

MICH. *(to MAURICE)* Poisoned!

MAU. No—you cannot suspect!

MICH. With evidence like this. *(points to her)* A rival.

MAU. Silence! For Heaven's sake, silence!

AD. Ah, the pain increases. You who love me so much, help me! I do not want to die. An hour ago I should have prayed for death as a blessing, but now I want to live. Oh Heavenly powers! Hear me! Let me live some days, some few short days, near Maurice. I am so young and life begins to appear so beautiful. Life! life! life! *(rises, then sinks into chair)* No, no, I shall not live; every effort is in vain. I feel life ebbing away. Do not quit me, Maurice, I can see you now, but I shall not be able to see you much longer. Hold my hand; you will not much longer feel its pressure. There, there, you will remember me, will you not? Adieu, Maurice; adieu, Michonnet; my two, my only friends! *(dies)*

Curtain.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.		PAGE.
Amateur Operas	30	Male Character Pieces	25
Amateur Plays	35	Miscellaneous Edition	22
Articles needed by Amateurs	45	Mrs. Jarley's Wax Works	26
Bits of Burlesques	26	Music for Sale	31
Bound Set of Plays	23	Music to Loan	32
Brough's Burlesques	30	Nigger Jokes and Stump Speeches	28
Bulwer Lytton's Plays	24	Operettas	25
Burnt Cork	45	Pantomimes	26
Carnival of Authors	29	Parlour Comedies	23
Charades	26	Parlour Magic	23
Comic Dramas for Male Characters	30	Parlour Pantomimes	34
Costume Plates, Male	39	Pieces of Pleasantry	26
Costume Plates, Female	42	Reciters and Speakers	34
Cumberland's Edition	16	Ristori's Plays	23
Darkey Drama	27	Round Games	23
Dramas for Boys	30	Rouge	46
English Operas	31	Scenery	48
Engravings	24	Scenes for Amateurs	24
Ethiopian Dramas	27	Scriptural Plays	30
Evening's Entertainment	28	Sensation Dramas	26
Fairy and Home Plays	28	Sensation Series	26
French Opera Bouffes	30	Serio-Comic Dramas, Male Characters	30
French's Edition	2	Shadow Pantomimes	24
French's Standard and Minor Drama	14	Shakespearean Costumes	31
Grease Paints	48	Shakespeare's Plays	22
Guide Books	29	Tableaux Lights	45
Italian Operas	30	Tableaux Vivants	29
Juvenile Plays	23	Temperance Plays	38
Knight's Cabinet Shakespeare	23	Tom Taylor's Comedies	24
Ladies' Plays	29	Vocal Music of Shakespeare's Plays	24
Lighting for Private Theatricals	46	Webster's Acting Edition	21
Make-up Book	43	Wigs, Beards, Moustaches, &c.	47
Make-up Box	48	Works on Costumes	31
Lining Colour	46		

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